

MARKS OF METHODISM.

MARKS
OF METHODISM
AND OTHER STUDIES.

BY
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TO THE
RIGHT HONORABLE SIR S. J. WAY,
Bt., P.C., D.C.L., LL.D.

A NO LESS DEVOTED THAN DISTINGUISHED
SON OF THE METHODIST MANSE,
I DEDICATE THESE STUDIES,
IN ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM.

FOREWORD.

IT is with considerable diffidence that I send forth this little book. Many other modern Methodists could have accomplished with a conspicuous success what I have herein only indifferently though sincerely attempted.

This volume is no manual for Students, but a simple setting of some aspects of Methodist life and service concerning which, it seems to me, there is a manifest need for the direction of attention to-day.

It is written for Methodists generally and young Methodists especially, whose inheritance of the past has not been duly appraised, and whose appreciation of its modern estimate needs to be translated into the terms of present privilege and future possibility.

Simple and unpretentious as these studies are, they must be judged within the limits of their set purpose.

“Only, since God doth often vessels make
Of lowly matter for high uses meet,
I throw me at His feet.”

I beg to acknowledge my obligation to the Rev. L. Wiseman for much historic information incorporated in the paper on the Evolution of Methodist Music.

BRIAN WIBBERLEY.

Adelaide, 1905.

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MARKS OF METHODISM.



I. THE PRACTICE OF A PASSION.

“ Belief’s fire once in me,
Makes of all else, but stiff to show itself ;
We penetrate our life with such a glow
As fire lends wood or iron.”

—BROWNING.

* * * * *

“ If you asked me what was the great message of Wesley, I should say it was conversion. Ere his time, conversion was an almost unknown word. He made it, he articulated it, he expressed the value of the soul before the ever-living God. If you take Wesley out of the eighteenth century, you change all its poetry into pallid prose, you extinguish its great religious romance.”

—DR. FAIRBAIRN.

* * * * *

“ I am housed at Mr. Wildman’s, an old friend of mine in these parts ; he and his wife are two perfectly honest Methodists. When I came I asked her after news and she replied : ‘ Why, Mr. Tennyson, there’s only one piece of news that I know—that Christ died for men.’ And I said to her, ‘ That is old news, and good news, and new news.’ ”

—LORD TENNYSON *to Miss Sellwood, 1839.*

MARKS OF METHODISM.

I. THE PRACTICE OF A PASSION.

A modern lexicographer has defined Methodism thus:—"The principles and practices of Methodists." But what are "the principles and practices of Methodists"?

Packed into shortest phraseology their synonyms may be expressed as a divine passion, a human pity, and a helpful fellowship. This needs no laboured demonstration, for Methodism is superlatively the realisation of a supreme, divine passion—subjectively an experience, and objectively an expansion. Its ideal function has been fulfilled to a marked degree in its real facts, in the actual spreading of holiness through the land, the essence and history of which practice, constitute a record of divine

passion working through a sublime pity, actively adopted and adaptly applied and consummated in a sympathetic spiritual fellowship.

Of Methodism's essential marks, passion is characteristic, the *sine qua non*, the prime fundamental, for, compared with this, all else is secondary. Relatively, Methodism is not a system, but a soul; not an institution, but an indwelling; not an organisation, but an organism. Thus, to use Wordsworth's pardonably mixed metaphor, passion "is the very pulse of the machine."

Methodism has had more than one form or phase. Its first expression, known as Oxford Methodism, and instituted by Charles Wesley and his fellow-students at Christ Church College, was an expedient, temporary and short-lived. It was churchy, rubrical and traditional; none the less it was a noble effort to kindle into a flame the wooden forms of English religion. But, in Georgia, John Wesley discovered that the wood was dead and rotten; and after several severe soul struggles he wrote his confession of failure in the self-revealing words:—"I learned in the ends of the earth that I, who went to America to convert the Indians, was never converted myself."

That judgment was the death sentence of Oxford Methodism, with its High Churchmanship, its sacramentarianism and institutionalism, and was executed on May 24, 1738, concerning which date John Wesley wrote:—"In the evening I went, very unwillingly, to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before 9, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed." Of this now familiar picture Lecky, the historian, pertinently says:—"It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting at Aldersgate-street forms an epoch in English history."

From that moment Oxford Methodism was submerged in the Evangelical Methodism which we inherit. To realise the divine passion moving through a "heart strangely warmed"—that is the principle, the characteristic trait, the all in all of Methodism. Out of that "warmed heart" proceeded the establishment of a "Society" at the Foundery, which became the germ cell of Methodism as an evangelical communion. It comprised "a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness." The presence of this divine passion was even then

the characteristic condition; "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins" being the only stipulated basis of membership. There was no theologic test, no confession of doctrine, nor subscription to articles. The potent passion was relied upon to preserve the personal faith from possible peril. ✓ "See that your heart be right with God," said Wesley; ✓ "I am sick of opinions. ✓ Give me a good and substantial religion, a humble, gentle love of God and man." ✓ "The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort.

I think and let think. ✓ What I want is holiness of life. They who have that are my brother and sister and mother." Here was one who believed with Jean Ingelow:

"Learn that to love is the one way to know,
Or God or man."

Of John Wesley might Browning have written:

"He at least believed in soul,
And was very sure of God."

Thus the accent was placed on the seat of passion—"the new heart," "the heart right with God," and its result, "holiness of life," and "substantial religion."

✓ Methodism is a spiritual organism, and every interpreter of its movement and history, its nature and

dynamic, from Wesley himself down to last Sunday's Methodist preacher, declares its crowning evidence and motive to be the individualised experience of a divine passion. ✓ Methodism was born at the Cross ; it abides there, singing with passionate lips Wesley's yearning lines :—

“ Oh, let me kiss Thy bleeding feet,
And bathe and wash them with my tears.”

The “critic peep and cynic bark ” which profess to detect and proceed to denounce a too physical and sensuous representation of a spiritual fact in the above-quoted ravishing lines, and which now and again protest that the Atonement is ethical, were anticipated by John Wesley, who declared that “ doctrine is for doing,” and therefore, with his brother Charles, went on singing :—

“ The story of Thy love repeat
In every fallen sinner's ears ;
That all may hear the quickening sound,
Since I, e'en I, have mercy found.”

Surely that is ethical—passion producing pity !
“ A principle and a practice,” and practice is a doing. The Cross is not a contemplation merely ; it becomes a compulsion. There and there only—

“Conscience wakes,
And the heart in pain for its own red stain,
For the sins of others breaks.”

The Methodists’ psalm of life—

“What shall I do to make it known

What Thou for all mankind hast done?”

—had its motive in passion, its movement in pity, its method in penetration, and its means in performance. So, then, Methodism’s “practice” has a policy and a programme, a purpose and a plan.

As an illustration of this passion in action, we may instance John Wesley’s farewell address at the Conference at Chester, in 1790:—“Fellow-labourers,” said he, “wherever there is an open door, enter in and preach the Gospel; if it be to two or three under a hedge or a tree, preach the Gospel; go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind. And the servant said, ‘Lord, it is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.’” Then, lifting his hand, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, he repeated, “And yet there is room; yet there is room.” Mark the message, the man, and the manner! Note the accents; two or three—go quickly—poor and maimed—under a hedge! Hear his repeated call: “Yet there is

room!" Watch the uplifted hand as if in prayer, intreaty, or benediction! See the tear-bathed face! Here was one whom Ezekiel's "man with an ink-horn" would have "marked"—one "who sighed and who cried." Another, who, "when He saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion."

To Wesley, the "Apostle John of England," no less than to Paul, "the Apostle of the Gentiles," apply Mr. F W H. Myers's interpretative lines:—

"Oft, when the word is on me to deliver,
 Open the heavens, and the Lord is there;
 Desert or throng, the City or the river
 Melt in a lucid paradise of air.
 Only like souls, I see the folk there under,
 Bound who should conquer, slaves who should
 be kings;
 Hearing thus one hope with an empty wonder;
 Sadly contented in the show of things.
 There with a rush the intolerable craving,
 Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call;
 Oh, to save these, to perish in their saving,
 Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

At Cardiff Wesley wrote in his journal:—"My heart was enlarged, and I knew not how to give over, so that I continued three hours." And that "enlarged heart" was ever characteristic as he

conducted services four and five times daily in the open-air. He preached at taverns while his horses were being baited. What an exquisitely revealing vignette is that of him standing on his father's tomb one lovely June evening and pouring out entreaty and persuasion "for near three hours," and that his fourth service for the day!

Who can forget the passion of Whitefield as he is seen standing with sinking candle in his hand to the last, pleading with the people on the very night in which he dies? And it must not be forgotten that Wesley and Whitefield had many differences, theological, temperamental, and otherwise; but one bond made them Methodists—what J. R. Green has designated "their intense reality, their earnestness, and their deep, tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind." This was the secret of their wonderful power as twenty thousand colliers listened to them at Kingswood, with tears making white channels down their blackened faces. Truly, in the language of Browning's profound conception:

"Through such souls alone,

God stooping shows sufficient of His light

For us i' the dark to rise by"

Even the "divisions" of Methodism which have resulted in the numerous separate denominations

may be distinctly traced to this very principle and practice of passion. Whatever the demerits of the initial misunderstandings may have been, they are as nothing to the merits of the intense evangelical fervour which everywhere marked the founders of the Minor Methodist Churches. It was the perception of the urgent need for evangelisation that was the quickening impulse and master-motive of those "great-hearts" like Bourne and Clowes, or O'Bryan and Thorne, who "moved with compassion," were truly "Primitive" Methodists and "Bible Christians." Their efforts were, as the famous Robert Hall declared, "very irregular," but they were "glorious irregularities" — Christlike, Apostolic, and Methodistic.

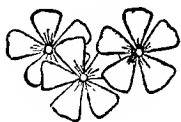
The cadence of this characteristic passion George Eliot caught and interpreted through the sweet lips and saintly life of the devout Dinah Morris. Methodism learned "the secret and method of Jesus," and long before Arnold had coined that felicitous phrase our fathers had caught the more felicitous fact. A "fire burned in their bones," and some result of that sublime passion we know. This is Methodism—pity, passion, power. Dr. Chalmers said that Methodism was "Christianity in earnest,"

and, as Professor Seeley observes, "Christianity is an enthusiasm or it is nothing."

Were the former days better than these? Are we degenerate? Is Methodism decadent? Is it "played out"?

"God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race!"

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!"



MARKS OF METHODISM.

II. THE ART OF AN ADAPTATION.

“A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. With consistency a great soul has nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall.”

—EMERSON.

* * * * *

“O for heat and light united.”

—JOHN WESLEY.

* * * * *

“You cannot cut John Wesley out of our National life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life’s work for England.”

—A. BIRRELL.

MARKS OF METHODISM.

II. THE ART OF AN ADAPTATION.

The characteristic passion of Methodism finds play in practice. The genius of its genesis persisting, it bursts the bonds of prescriptive orders and restrictive prohibitions; for "love at its uttermost" cannot be content or contained as a pent-up passion; it must be spent out; it demands a demonstration. Its source seeks a sphere; its emotion craves an embodiment; its action finds an accommodation. Its personal experience issues in a practical evangelism which in true apostolical spirit may often appear to many as "beside itself" as it becomes "all things to all men, if by any means it may save some." This the master minds of Methodism, from John Wesley downwards, have intuitively interpreted.

Thus, the product of the personal passion is the evolution of an evangelical efficiency, adaptable, in its application, to the special needs of the hour and the ever-varying necessities of clamant circumstances. This was the characteristic mark of Methodism's earliest effort, and still remains the sign manual of her worthiest workmanship.

"New occasions teach new duties," and into this spirit was Methodism, as an evangelical polity, baptised. In the wisdom of the Master it recognised that the new wine must be bottled in new skins, for the saving alike of both "the form and spirit of godliness."

Hence, Wesley became an innovator and iconoclast; the saint became a seer; the evangelist became an ecclesiastic; the popular, plain preacher became the people's path-finder.

Like Emerson's "Master-Builder"—

"Himself from God he could not free;

He builded better than he knew,—

The conscious stone to beauty grew."

Wesley was possessed not only of sight, but of insight, and in the art of adaptation of means to ends, stands out as a modern model of prophetic foresight, apostolic accommodation, and gigantic genius. Discharging the functions of his episcopal

office, he ordained his ministers, admitted laymen to the pulpits, and adopted field preaching—assumptions unheard of, and proceedings most irregular before his day. He edited the first religious newspaper of his country; under his influence a Methodist lady—Hannah Ball—conducted, and so founded, Sunday-schools—a quarter of a century before Robert Raikes; and, by his “Notes on the New Testament,” based on a new translation, he was the first “higher critic” of his day.

As every student knows, there are few modern social movements but had their germ in Wesley’s “warmed heart.” Of the Methodist Revival, admittedly, Methodism is the least result. Here, to change the metaphor, was the igniting torch that lit the fuel and fed the fires of the “new philanthropy.” Clarkson and Wilberforce were anticipated by John Wesley in his emancipation agitation. He preceded John Howard in a movement for ameliorating the ferocity of the penal laws and prison life. He founded the first free dispensaries, established banks for the poor, and even instituted a still much-needed funeral reform. How he popularised science his little manuals of medicine, grammar, history, etc., fully attest. By his translations and abridgments of standard books, and by his original writ-

ings in prose and poetry, he stands out as the leading litterateur of his times, his publications amounting to upwards of two hundred volumes.

No critic can question the conclusion of Mr. Birrell, who, in his "Miscellanies," regards John Wesley as one who "lived nearer the centre" of the life of his century than any of the great men of his time. And with what result history testifies. Mr. Green records the fact that "Methodism originated the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, ignorance, physical suffering, and social degradation. A new moral enthusiasm appeared. Methodism changed in a few years the whole temper of English society."

With what significance are Wesley's words freighted as, when prevented from ministering within the precincts of the parish church, he declared, "The world is my parish!" No geography merely can exhaust that sublime utterance of its content. He was a moral, social, intellectual and spiritual Atlas. The world of all human elements and relationships became his parish and remains his debtor.

But why repeat the eulogy of history to-day, and spend time in thus weaving garlands for the grave of the dead? Would it not be better to be engaged

in making history than in worshipping it? If this were the only plain issue of the alternative, yes, certainly; but it is not, and we simply venerate in order to more surely re-create. If we would grip the genius of Methodism's modern evangelism we need to know the life history of its prototype. If we would know its twentieth-century potentialities and prospects, we must know the purposes and practice of John Wesley; for, as Professor Kealing says:—"Wesley was Methodism concentrated; Methodism is Wesley disseminated. His character has become its characteristics. What he sought to do, it will do. What he purposed, it proposes." "The thing to be coveted, so it seems to me," says Dr. Fitchett, "is some burning conception of what John Wesley was. We don't realise yet what he was, and what he did, and the outcome that is present and is to come."

Adaptation was Wesley's chief characteristic. Wherever he saw a need he grappled with it. The "dead hand" he disregarded; time's traditions he despised. In him Methodism was up to date. And in essential Methodism the spirit of 1787 is the spirit of to-day. Jotham Preston, a Yorkshire local preacher, used to say, "I love Methodism. It fits me like my coat." And every one could see that his

coat was by no means either of rigid fashion or tight fit. The history of Methodism has demonstrated its possession of the power of re-adjustment and art of adaptation, to a remarkable degree. Changing circumstances in the social structure, different stages of progress and civilisation, and varying forms of constitutional government present no insuperable difficulties to the mission of Methodism. It has naturalised itself everywhere, and is apparently ever ready to welcome the unforeseen event. It is adaptable not only to a changed state of the great public mind, but to the new demands of our swiftly moving public necessities.

Twenty-five years ago Great Britain was deploring the wretchedness and sordidness consequent upon the then prevailing social conditions. The result, from a religious standpoint, was the indifference of the masses to matters of spiritual import. London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and other huge cities were confronted by the problem of religious indifferentism. Then Methodism, true to its mission and instinct, instituted a new movement. It not only opened its church doors and announced a service, but it did something to create a real religious interest among the masses of the people. It exemplified what Hugh Price Hughes designated "the philan-

thropy of God." To-day that work needs no plea or commendation. Its inherent necessities have created a special department and recognition in Methodist enterprise. Its workers are counted by thousands, and six figures are required to express its numerical significance. The "Forward Movement" has been true to its pretension—ever forward and always movement.

And if fuller opportunity for concentration be the clamant need of to-day; if, for example, our large towns are demanding a greater variety of work, and of better quality—which necessity will demand some modification of the big Circuit system; if the growth of intelligence, of education, of social aspiration, etc., demand a pulpit that can teach as well as preach, that can see and lead; or if our manysided social work must take under its purview not only the lapsed and ignorant, but that still larger area of population to whom modern life is a swift-flowing current, full of perilous quicksands and whirling eddies—if these be the need of the hour to be fairly faced and fully met, then, says Methodism, "Be it so. Here am I, send me."

What new methods the newer Methodism will adopt we do not prophesy; but, if it be true to the old spirit, it will still go on "devising means that

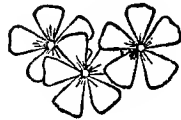
the banished be not expelled." It will use old means if they are good, new means if they are better, and any means that are Christlike and effective.

Now that suggestions for the re-adjustment and re-organisation of our mission machinery, whether in Metropolitan or Provincial "Forward Movements" are before us, shall we not extend our line of vision? Behold the fields are white unto harvest.

We have the masses who need the newer Methodism; we have the means to meet this need. Only the will is wanting to achieve triumphs worthier of the honoured name we bear, the profession we make, and the "present age" we serve. With this we shall go up and possess the land, for we are well able. And if ability is always accountability, and if opportunity is always obligation, we shall not—we dare not—wait for empty churches and burdensome debts to constitute the call to "go forward."

Our God makes the pace; at our peril we loiter. He marches to-day with quickening step and accelerated rate. Let us keep time to the music of His glorious purpose. Methodism's movement is His. We may march as torch-bearers at the head, or as pall-bearers at the bier. Let us make God's selection our election. Keeping up with the measured

beat of His step we too shall know in yet larger measure than our founder dreamt of, that "Best of all is, God is with us."



MARKS OF METHODISM.

III. THE FACT OF A FELLOWSHIP.

“Ye, as living stones are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.”

—S. PETER.

* * * * *

“Still holy lives
Reveal the Christ of whom the letter told,
And the new Gospel verifies the old.”

—WHITTIER.

* * * * *

“Methodism made one striking and original contribution to the institutions of the Church, in the Class-meeting. Never, so far as I know, in any Church has there been so near an approach to the ideal of pastoral oversight as the Class-meeting, in its perfect form provides ; and it also provides for that communion of saints which is almost as necessary for the strength and the joy and the harmonious growth of the Christian life as fellowship with God.”

—DR. DALE.

MARKS OF METHODISM.

III. THE FACT OF A FELLOWSHIP.

On his way to England as the Fernley Lecturer, Dr. Fitchett made a Canadian call *en route*, and in one of the consequently inevitable speeches, our General President said, *inter alia*, and in his own inimitable manner:—"We must seek to recover the lost secret of our success. For in some way we have lost the secret of the earlier years. There are two ideas of the religious life. There is the tram-car idea and the fireside idea. In the tramcar you sit beside your fellow-passenger. You are all going in the same direction, but you have no fellowship, no intercourse with or interest in one another. There is much religion of that sort. Then there is the fireside, where the family meet together, where

they are at home, where they converse one with another of common pursuits and common interests, and where a common relationship binds all together in a warm bond of love and fellowship. Now, Methodism stands for that type of religion. It stands for the fireside idea. Methodism is a family with interests and ends in common, talking them over and getting mutual help and sympathy. That is what differentiates it from all other religious bodies, the emphasis it puts upon an articulate religious consciousness and upon the fireside idea of religion."

"The lost secret of success!" "The secret of the earlier years!" What is that? What are the marks of it? What are the "signs manual" by which the "living stones" in this "spiritual house" may be identified and attested? Let Mr. Wesley, as the human architect of the building, tell us. A glance at the processes by which the buliding grew into a holy temple—distinctly "differentiated from all other religious bodies"—is happily possible to us. And by this means our search to "recover the lost secret of our success" may be amply rewarded.

In his "Plain Account of the People called Methodists" Mr. Wesley states, in language as simple as forcible, how the first "Society" was formed. "One and another and another came to us

asking what they should do, being distressed on every side ; as every one strove to weaken, and none to strengthen, their hands in God. We advised them, ‘Strengthen you one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may “endure to the end and be saved.” They said, ‘But we want you likewise to talk with us often, to direct and quicken us in our way, to give us the advices which you well know we need, and to pray with us as well as for us.’ I asked, ‘Which of you desire this? Let me know your names and places of abode.’ They did so. But I soon found that they were too many for us to talk with severally so often as they wanted it. So I told them, ‘If you will come together every Thursday, in the evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer, and give you the best advice I can.’ Thus arose, without any previous design on either side, what was afterwards called a Society.

It quickly appeared that their thus uniting together answered the end proposed therein.

Upon reflection, I could not but observe, ‘This is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity.’”

Such was the rise in 1739 of the “United Societies”; and such is the secret—whether lost or no—

of Methodism's success. It is an "open secret"; but it is also a "family secret." Three years after its inception it assumed its more differentiating phase. The "class" within the "Society" was then formed, its origin being as follows:—"There was a somewhat heavy debt on the Bristol meeting-house, and the Society being called to consider it, one member said:—"Let every member of the Society give a penny a week till the debt is paid." It was remarked that many were poor, and could not afford it; therefore, said the proposer, "Put eleven of the poorest with me. I will call on them weekly, and make up what they cannot give." Others did likewise. Soon after, Wesley says, "The persons who acted as collectors or leaders informed me that such and such persons did not live as they ought.

It struck me immediately, this is the very thing we want."

Thus it came to pass that the "class," which at first was purely a financial expedient, developed into an agency for shepherding the flock and fostering the spiritual life of the early Methodists. A month later Wesley divided the London Society on the same principle. He remarks in connection therewith:—"I appointed several earnest and sensible men to meet me, to whom I showed the great diffi-

culty I had found of knowing the people who desired to be under my care. After much discourse they all agreed there could be no better way to come to a sure, thorough knowledge of each person than to divide them into classes like those at Bristol." And he adds:—"I can never sufficiently praise God for this, the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest."

The subsequent "class meeting" was simply an embodiment of the purposes and combination of the plans proposed by the formation of both the "Society" and the "Class." It was at once a means of Christian fellowship and guardian oversight. Thus the class meeting stands as the ideal expression of the secret of Methodism as a living organism and corporate community. The new converts, as conscious members of the body of Christ, were conscious members one of another. The whole body was compacted by that which every joint supplied, and, according to the effectual working of every part, made increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

This is Methodism's essential secret of success. We are not called to private pieties, but to a sanctified membership in a living organism. The indivi-

dually saved man is introduced into a Society where for his own and others' good, he is called to the sanctities of fellowship. The true "ecclesia" is the "Household of God," where provision must be made for the nurture of the family as such; where brethren mingle not so much as brother-men as brother-Christians, and—

"Each his friendly aid affords,
And feels his brother's care."

Thus "fellowship is one of the four corner-stones of the Methodist building," as Professor Green aptly puts it. John Wesley was powerfully influenced by William Law, and the Methodist's obligation to the Mystics is not yet estimated; though, fortunately, from the one accusation brought against the Mystics—viz., "that they have sought and found God in their own souls and in Nature, but not so often in the souls of other men and women," Methodism was saved at its inception by its practice of the "Communion of Saints." It has rather taught, to quote Professor Tasker's fine phrase, that "the highest end of Christian communion is attained when it enables us to find God in the souls of other people." Our spiritual experiences are deepened and enriched by the fusion of soul with soul. We cannot afford to isolate ourselves from spiritual communion with

others. The Methodist's fellowship becomes a new Christian evidence—an argument from experience. With Hartley Coleridge—

“He knows the path was trod

By saints of old who knew their way to God.”
And he can say, with the certitude of Novalis, that
“my belief gains infinitely the moment I can convince another of its truth.”

“Iron sharpeneth iron,” and “two are better than one,” says Solomon; just so, the very fellowship of saints is a blessing. For our learning is it written, “They that feared the Lord spake often one with another,” and “These continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ fellowship.” How sweet the delight, and how great the profit of that early fellowship! The “enchanted ground” of Methodism had a secret—a secret known to Piety, Prudence, and Charity—and, like Bunyan, Wesley found that
“Saints’ fellowship, if it be managed well,

Keeps them alive, and that in spite of hell.”

Well, as a modern writer said:—“Did we but turn our thoughts to the possibilities that reside in class meeting, fellowship meeting, prayer meeting, or in the mutual, quiet, intimate converse of mated souls in yet closer circles—as was customary in the early days of Methodism—the special gains to Chris-

tian character and usefulness would be simply astounding."

Dr. Fitchett's expression of fear recalls Dr. Dale's familiar recognition and merited admonition: "In Methodism the idea of Church fellowship is largely realised. This, I believe, is one of the chief secrets of its rapid growth. The Methodist people should take heed how they treat so precious and wonderful a growth. It renders possible a far more effective fulfilment of the pastorate, and a far more perfect realisation of the communion of saints, than are possible in any other Protestant community."

Other great theologians and leaders have recognised in the class meeting an approximation to Apostolic Christianity, and a unique opportunity for the expression of Christian life as alone realised in fellowship. We may cite Professor Tholbuck, who, spending some time in Oxford for the purpose of consulting its libraries, attended a class meeting, which he said was "the nearest reproduction of primitive Church fellowship he had ever enjoyed."

Then, in addition to thus making provision for a prime necessity of Christian life, the class meeting is a centre of many points of power which our modern life dare not ignore.

Against either sacerdotalism on the one hand, or rationalism on the other, what better safeguard could be provided or antidote offered than this institution, which stands a bulwark of spiritual freedom, and an evidence of religious life?

To young converts it is our training ground; and to all of us, amid the excitement and turmoil of life, its quiet resting place becomes precious vantage ground on the side of God and the spiritual world. Indeed, the class meeting is the Sedan of Methodism. It is our strongest bond of union, our most efficient means of spiritual culture, and our most effective instrument of pastoral oversight. Its future is the future of Methodism.

There are many objections current against the class meeting, raised chiefly by those who have either never tried it or never tried it aright. Generally speaking, the class meeting has not received fair treatment. It has been judged too much by some of its failures. Eccentric leaders and garrulous, fossilised members have done their work. In many instances the class meeting has become a stereotyped and petrified thing, without vitality or utility—in no sense a fellowship, but a fetish. Consequently, the revolutionary iconoclast demands its displacement.

Let us remember that the type is right. It only needs strengthening. Where imperfection obtains, it needs rectification, not abstention. The critic is to be welcomed if he will only lend a hand.

Experience created the class meeting; duty enforces it; privilege uses it; and profitableness recommends it. "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."



METHODIST WORSHIP.

“ God’s worship is
That only He inspires ; and His bright words,
Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart,
Return to Him in prayer as dew to heaven.”

—BAILEY.

* * * * *

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness ;
Bow down before Him, His glory proclaim ;
Gold of obedience and incense of lowliness
Bring and adore Him, the Lord is His name !”

—J. S. B. MONSELL.

* * * * *

“ Bright Thy presence when it breaketh,
Lord, on some rapt soul apart ;
Sweet Thy Spirit when it speaketh
Peace unto some lonely heart ;
Blest the raptures
From unaided lips that start.
But more bright Thy presence dwelleth
In a waiting, burning throng ;
Yet more sweet the rapture swelleth
Of a many voiced song ;
More divinely
Glows each soul glad souls among.”

—ANON.

METHODIST WORSHIP.

The universal discussion on Methodist hymnology has evoked already a revival of the complementary question of Methodist liturgy.

In that fine old phrase, "Let us worship God," there is a depth of meaning which many of us have not yet fathomed. Evidently its full significance is not yet comprehended by us. It is true, we have various forms of an "Order of Service," in which Divine Worship is the object, but, whether any of our present "modes" is the fittest expression of "worship," is a question burning in the hearts of not a few of our people.

Our modern term "worship" is the old Saxon word "worthship"—i.e., the adequate recognition of God's worth or due. In Old Testament usage it is sometimes modified to indicate mere respect or

homage; but, generally and essentially, it is employed to indicate the supreme homage man can offer to God—viz., adoration. Accordingly, the most rigid instructions were given concerning worship to God's ancient people, the Jews. They had a ritual so complete that it appealed to and employed every faculty in its exercise, and from it there could be no deviation. In apparent contrast, and yet supplementary to this, the New Testament gives us a few actual directions or details, but, nevertheless, it clearly lays down certain principles of worship, fundamental and sufficient. According to its teaching, we may regard worship as the effort of the human soul to realise and partake of the Divine Presence and Life.

With the necessarily combined characteristic righteousness of the Old Testament idea, and the spiritual nature of the New Testament conception, I assume that we are in full knowledge and perfect agreement, and out of this assumption arises the question here to be discussed, "How can this Divine Worship be best set forth in our Methodist Church service?" With modes of worship such as obtain in other Churches we have nothing to do, save for illustrative purposes, in this article.

The usual Methodist Church service consists of the following order:—Hymn, prayer, anthem (so-called), reading, hymn, sermon, collection, hymn and benediction. In some of our Churches a Psalm is chanted, and in some others a Psalm is read in Kindergarten fashion, alternate verses being taken by preacher and congregation.

Now, we may ask, is this a perfect or fitting expression of our homage to God, of God's worth? Does it adequately meet the requirements of our definition of worship? Does it satisfy even our human instincts? Surely there is a more excellent way, and therefore I submit the urgency of reform and modification. I venture to say that worship, in the foregoing order, is related to a secondary place and consideration. The sermon is usually the strong point, and the other exercises are frequently spoken of as "the preliminaries"—i.e., pre limen—outside the threshold; or as the "incidental" parts of the service, as though worship were the hearing of something addressed to the intellect and conscience merely. I plead, therefore, for a truer conception of worship, and a higher standard of its expression.

There are two grave charges which may, with a considerable show of reason, be urged against our present mode of worship. First, that it is anti-social; and, second, that it is unæsthetic.

PUBLIC WORSHIP SHOULD BE SOCIAL.

Provision should, therefore, be made for this necessity ; and yet, in what modern form of service is it recognised? Examine the prevailing chief methods of Christendom, and the lack of communion is a defect glaringly apparent in all. In the Roman Church the priest does everything. In the Anglican Church, the priest and people take equal part, by means of a liturgy ; but, even in this division of labour, the social idea finds little expression, because the liturgy provides for one service only, and, in consequence of its constant repetition, this is ever exposed to the constant danger of becoming a bald, hackneyed, and mere mechanical exercise, and, therefore, a hindrance rather than a help to social worship.

In Methodist, and, indeed, in almost all Nonconformist Churches, the minister reads, prays, preaches, and generally conducts the service, leaving the congregation to sing three or four hymns and to contribute to the collection, and the choir to sing an anthem. Manifestly, the social element is conspicuous by its absence, and in this respect it may compare with Romanism, as in both instances the minister does nearly everything, leaving for the people a mere fraction of the service.

A fundamental element in human nature is our social instinct, and, unless this is fully recognised and fittingly provided for, public worship, in its true significance, seems to me impossible; yea, may we not go further, and say that it is the presence of this instinct that makes public worship a common necessity, inasmuch as in it our common faith, our common prayer, and our common thanksgiving seek a common expression?

But what is "common" in our ordinary Methodist worship? Even the hymns are the choice of the preacher, and generally selected to illustrate his sermon, as also is the lesson. The prayer has in it little common thanksgiving or common supplication. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? The whole congregation are dependent, in this holy exercise, upon the mood of the minister rather than their common necessity. In what sense can it be called common or public prayer? It is the parson's prayer, after all, "said privately in public."

The preacher is said "to lead the congregation in prayer," but can they truly follow, unless they know where he is going?

But, alas! some know too well where he is going, for he generally travels north, east, west and south; visits "all sorts and conditions of men"; and at

last, having exhausted himself, he asks God "to make up in giving what he has failed in asking," and then ends with the Lord's Prayer. As to the sermon, the one remaining portion of this service, this also belongs to the preacher of necessity. It is his very own—or should be.

Again, if worship is social, it should be not only "common," but also responsive. As illustrative of this, take the Scripture patterns, notably the account of the ideal worship of heaven as portrayed in the Revelation of John (see chaps. v. and xix.). What was the Psalter but a Temple Service-book compiled for responsive worship

Of course, I may be reminded that Christ warned us against the formality of Jewish ceremonies and Pharisaic worship, and I quite apprehend and appreciate the objection. The danger of using any form of worship is formalism, but we must have some form, and the matter of the present contention is, whether the forms of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, which may prove to be the formalism of the twentieth, shall be simply tolerated on this false plea, while our common instinct is craving a satisfaction which they do not supply.

There may be as much formalism and idolatry in reliance upon our bare forms of worship as in the use of the most ornate; and many a Methodist, who fancies he has never bowed the knee to Baal may be as superstitious in his hatred of superstitions observed by him in other communities as a Puseyite himself.

What is there to prevent our compiling a series of liturgies—a sort of Christian year compendium—exclusively from the Bible if desired, although I do not see that portions of that noble liturgy of the Church of England could not be modified—for it is the possession of no mere section of the Church—so that the objection which I have stated to the present Anglican mode could no longer be urged against the principle of responsible worship? The principle is manifestly good; what we need is a broad and generous application of it. If such a series of services could be compiled and adopted, each liturgy having in it a place for a “free prayer” by the minister, and also a place for “silent prayer”—for the personal presentation of particular requests, which neither a liturgy nor the extemporaneous prayer of the minister can embody—our service would be more in harmony with our present conception of worship.

In the "Order of Public Worship," as adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, a provision is made that lessons taken from the Psalms may be read "responsively." Many of our congregations attempt to do this in Australia; but the books used most frequently are Bibles or Psalm Books found in the pews. These are usually inadequate in number, and the reading is frequently halting, feeble, and unsatisfactory. Even if a book were in the hands of every member of the congregation and all should read, the difficulty would be only partially met, for two reasons: First, many of the Psalms are not adapted to such reading. John Wesley saw this, and eliminated some of them from the Psalter. A second and greater difficulty is that the verses as numbered in our Bibles do not usually conform to the Hebrew parallelism. The reading, therefore, is *alternate*, but not responsive.

Anticipating criticism, I know I shall be told that Jesus said the noblest worship—the worship God seeks—is worship in spirit and truth; the free spontaneous outgoing of the heart in sincerity. In reply, let me say that this is exactly what is here pleaded for. Because He did not inculcate slavery to old traditional forms—which, in this instance, can have so little meaning and less charm; because He

did not inculcate silence; because He did not utter one word against concerted, responsive, common worship; but, because, on the contrary, He did give His disciples in a common form a common prayer, as He said: "Our Father," "give us," "forgive us our trespasses," I plead for a mode of worship which is at once spiritual, free, and social. It was not against forms that Christ protested, but the idolatry of them, when they were enthroned in place of God. Therefore, Christ demanded worship in spirit—the adoration of God as a Spirit by the human heart; that secured, the heart finds its own expression in adequate forms, using doctrines and symbols couched in song, speech, and posture, as transient vehicles of worship.

PUBLIC WORSHIP SHOULD BE BEAUTIFUL.

Among the changing conditions of our time there is a growing appreciation of culture and fine feeling. A wave of æstheticism is passing over us. We have higher education, technical instruction, and art classes, by which the sense of the beautiful and sublime is developed. Consequently, there is a keener sense of the incongruous; and in our modes

of worship this must be reckoned with, and if worship is not to be vulgarity, must be provided for. Hailing this spirit as an ally, we shall find it a splendid helpmeet of the religious feeling. Painfully some have to record their knowledge that our Church in the past has not so recognised it as such, and we are suffering to-day in consequence. Not a few Methodist people of fine sensibilities have left the communion of their fathers for one where they could find some æsthetic enjoyment in worship, and this is a result that I, for one, cannot look upon with equanimity. It is cheap to sneer, and say they are not of us, or they would not have gone from us; that they were not worth keeping, and so on; but they are the very people that are worth keeping, and they left us with many a pang and heart-break, to find in another fellowship what ours did not supply—a satisfaction in Divine worship of their æsthetic cravings. We may denounce the revival of ornate worship as ritualistic and sacerdotal, but this does not account for its motive or its meaning, and says little for our perception, judgment, or taste. It is the spiritual aspect of a great movement in the direction of artistic culture—a movement which ought to be pressed into religious service. The people to whom religion means much will always feel as the

Jew did, that nothing is too rare or too precious for its use, and they will, moreover, feel that it is the office of religion in a community to cleanse the emotions, to elevate the thoughts, to stir the finer impulses of men's hearts, and to lead human souls to the bosom of the Infinite, and whatever does this we cannot neglect or despise, but must appreciate and utilise.

But the question may be asked, "Since God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit, may not the soul in true worship act independently of all accessories, of forms however beautiful, and even sanctuaries?" True! but it by no means follows because it may, therefore it ought. Indeed, if man stands related to two worlds, and is therefore complex, not pure spirit merely, it is a question whether his worship of the Divine can be wholly as spirit to spirit. The movement of the soul towards God creates certain corresponding emotions of a temporal and natural kind; exciting, emotional, and even physical sight is kindled; our whole nature glows with a central heat; and this insight and fire is increased when our approach to God finds sensible expression; hence the helpfulness, if not necessity, of embodying our spiritual ideas in outward befitting forms. For example, let religious awe strike

us and instinctively we kneel, our very posture making the idea more real and vivid. What is the Supper of our Lord but a form in which we desire to recall His passion and sympathetically realise it? And so, in our purely human relations with each other. Patriotism is embodied in a national flag, while our affection seeks its expression in the gift it makes. I may be told this is sentiment. Is it? But if it is, is it not very beautiful, very helpful, and in the matter now under discussion, very necessary? The Psalmist called upon all within him to bless the Lord, and surely our homage should be no smaller gift. What is falsely called a purely spiritual worship is an attempt to evolve and sustain devotion from isolated powers of the spirit that are never meant to act alone.

If our worship is to bring into service all our faculties, including imagination, memory, and sense of the sublime, we shall want the richest poetry, the rarest eloquence, the most ravishing music, and finest architecture; and unless these forms are given to our spiritual ideas, our "hours of insight" will be few, and we shall lose half the human joy, the noble inspiration and exquisite pleasure of worship. "Am I reminded," asks Dr. Martineau, "of what is called the simplicity of the early Church; of the

upper chamber in Jerusalem, or the unadorned pro-seucha, that sufficed for Apostolic disciples? Yes; but this was at least the best they had; and no more is asked from us. Less than this, no true devotion has ever given. In ages and among sects where the sanctuary has been bare, so too, has been the private house; but it is ever a fatal sign—of art decaying into luxury and religion into contempt—when men permit the house of God to be meaner than their own, when they allow to their domestic pleasure what they refuse to their collective worship.

‘The only constant rule is this, that devotion is the offering of ourselves, of our whole selves, of our best selves, to God.’

I have done little more than touch the general principle of worship in this paper; but I must now leave it for others to accept what of worth there may be in these poor words, and if these dim suggestions should stimulate thought and provoke discussion, my mind’s present purpose will be achieved. The way may then be clear to elevate to higher significance the function of public worship; and this accomplished, an ideal Order of Service in Methodist Worship is within the range of practical realities.

METHODIST MUSIC.

I. THE EVOLUTION OF THE GERM.

“A new musical impulse was given to the people which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England.”

—J. R. GREEN.

* * * * *

“Indeed, by common consent, for congregational singing, united, exact, lusty, modest, brisk and spiritual—qualities which his (Wesley’s) famous rules so strongly enjoin—the Methodist services were unrivalled.”

—F. L. WISEMAN.

* * * * *

“Those who to-day feel music telling out their deepest wants and proclaiming their praise of the good and holy, might recognise in the music echoes of the songs which broke from the lips of Miriam and David, of Ambrose and Gregory, and those simple peasants who one hundred years ago were stirred to life on the moors of Cornwall and Wales.”

—S. A. BARNETT.

METHODIST MUSIC.

I. THE EVOLUTION OF THE GERM.

It is the purpose of this paper to trace, though in merest outline, the characteristic spirit, sources, and development of our Methodist Psalmody—or, to put it in shortest phrase, the evolution of Methodist music. The present Tune-book is the latest, fullest, most highly-organised, and consummately-finished product of a long process. But not so much what it is, as how it came to be; whence its roots, and how it grew, is my theme.

Music is native to Methodism. One scarcely needs to be reminded how that Methodism was literally born in song; how, in order to meet the conscious necessities of the new spiritual experience which followed the Pentecost of 1738, a new vocal expres-

sion was imperative ; how, in providing for this requirement, the Wesleys were thrown upon their own resources ; and how, in a remarkable output of versification, their supply met the clamant need. Hence, Charles Wesley's immortal creations, and John Wesley's sublime translations, were soon on universal lip in the marked and general outburst of song which everywhere accompanied the revival, whether in field-preaching or in meetings of the Societies.

The new occasion taught new duty, and with its emergence there arose new difficulty. The one dominant note and characteristic feature of the early Methodist hymns was their intense passion. Their one absorbing theme was the

“ Infinite, unexhausted Love !”

“ Who can sound the depth unknown
Of Thy redeeming grace
Grace that gave Thine only Son
To save a ruined race !”

And the one passionate yearning was—

“ Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing,
My great Redeemer's praise ;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace !

Jesus ! the Name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease ;
'Tis music in the sinners' ears,"

The problem was to provide appropriate music to wed such vitally experimental and strongly emotional verse, and the problem was neither easily nor speedily solved ; but some good music was ready for Wesley's immediate use. If the words of many of the metrical Psalms were not to his mind—and he pronounced Sternhold's version "miserable, scandalous doggerel"—nevertheless, many of the tunes to which they were sung were suitable and effective. Among their composers were some whose work is immortal. Thomas Tallis, William Birde, John Day, Ravenscroft, Farrant and Dr. Croft had conspicuously contributed to the devotional vocal music of the times ; while Henry Purcell, before "departing to that blessed place where only his harmony can be exceeded," had left a rich legacy of religious music. Perhaps some of their music has been saved from obscurity in its seizure by the Wesleys as the vehicle for carrying home to the hearts of the people the words of the new Methodist hymns, This much is certain, that the best of the old Psalm tunes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were revived in the Methodist revival, and even now, we

shall not willingly let them die. One need only instance such tunes as "Farrant," "Angel's Song," Tallis' "Canon," "Bedford," "York," "Winchester Old," "Irish," "St. Magnus," "St. Matthew," "St. Ann," and "St. Mary," to show our obligation to this well-spring.

But the old existing Psalm tunes are not the only fount of early Methodist music. A second source was discovered in the then current folk songs of old England. As by Luther in the European Reformation, so by Wesley in the Methodist Revival, there was no hesitation to appropriate such secular melody as, by its simplicity, strength and popularity, was deemed helpful to the cause. Wesley, in the name of God, laid his hand on the best of the most popular musical compositions of his day, and set them to his own and his brother's hymns, declaring in set terms that "the devil wasn't going to have all the best music." There is a well-authenticated story to the effect that once in Cornwall Charles Wesley, while preaching was interrupted by a gang of half-drunken sailors, who, in their anxiety for a spree, invaded the preaching-ring, howling a popular music-hall song of the period known as "Nancy Dawson." The preacher stopped short, and, addressing his interrupters directly, honestly told them

that he liked the tune of their song, but cared not for the words, and he offered to conclude the service, and to go home and write some new verses to their melody if they would meet him later, and sing their tune to his words. Arrested by the frankness of the preacher, the offer was forthwith accepted. Charles Wesley supplied the verses, and very soon, to the strains of "Nancy Dawson," the whole crowd, with the sailors, were singing a hymn inviting song in praise of Jesus as "Soul of Music," at the same time embodying the marrow of Methodist doctrine, and incidentally justifying the preacher's act of accommodation. The hymn contains the following stanzas:—

"Listed in the cause of sin,
Why should good be evil?
Music, alas! too long hath been
Pressed to obey the devil.

"Come, let us see if Jesus' love,
Will not as well inspire us;
This is the theme of those above,
This upon earth shall fire us.

"Who of His love doth once partake,
He evermore rejoices;

Melody in our hearts we make,
Melody in our voices.

“Then let us in His praises join,
Triumph in His salvation;
And ascribe to love divine
Worship and adoration.

“Heaven already is begun,
Opened in each believer,
Only believe, and still sing on,
Heaven is ours for ever.”

Should the foregoing incident prove sufficiently interesting to arouse one's sense of musical curiosity to enquire what the tune was like, such desire may be readily gratified by listening to the children's play-song, “Here we go round the mulberry-bush,” which is practically the first four lines of “Nancy Dawson.”

In such material as was thus already to hand—“Psalm tunes and folk songs”—the initial and temporary need of early Methodism was provided for; but the quantity was limited in variety, and the quality was lacking in vivacity, consequently tune-books, as well as hymn-books, came into general request, and so John Wesley set himself to the task of supplying his people's want, and published, in 1742—

“A COLLECTION OF TUNES, SET TO MUSIC, AS THEY ARE COMMONLY SUNG AT THE FOUNDERY.”

This is the prototype of all subsequent publications; it is the true germ, the nucleated cell, of Methodist music. It is a collection of 39 melodies, including those already mentioned; and, further, reveals a *third source* whence many of the finest of the old Methodist tunes were drawn. That source was the German chorale, with its massive movement and exquisite beauty, specimens of which are strewn throughout the present Tune-book. This first Methodist musical collection is valuable now only to the antiquarian, though four of its themes have been harmonised by Dr. Bridge for the present book—viz., “Marienbourn” (336), “Amsterdam” (591), “Islington” (483), “Old 115th” (595).

Of vastly more importance to the Methodist musician is Mr. Wesley’s next publication, which appeared in 1761, under the title:—

“SELECT HYMNS, WITH TUNES ANNEXT, DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR THE USE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS.”

It comprised 149 hymns, preceded by 115 tunes, entitled “Sacred Melody,” with which was bound Wesley’s “Grounds of Vocal Music,” and his well-known

directions for singing. It contains a characteristic preface, in which Mr. Wesley says:—"I have been endeavouring for more than twenty years to procure such a book as this. But in vain; masters of music were above following any direction but their own. And I was determined, whoever compiled this, should follow my direction, not *mending* our tunes, but setting them down neither better nor worse than they were. At length I have prevailed. The following collection contains all the tunes which are in *common use* among us. They are pricked true, exactly as I desire our congregation may sing them.

The volume likewise is *small*, as well as the *price*. This, therefore, I recommend preferable to all others."

This book has almost disappeared; but a reprint of a later edition, under the title of "Sacred Harmony," still abides. It embodies Wesley's "Sacred Melody," with a figured bass and several hymn anthems, such as "Vital Spark," added.

TO "SACRED MELODY"

as the final authority and highest court of appeal on matters of typical early Methodist Psalmody we must therefore turn. It discloses six characteristic features as marks of Methodist music:—

1. Most of the tunes published in 1742 (the Foundery Collection) again appear.

2. Adaptations from Handel's oratorios find a place. "Soldiers of Christ, Arise," is set to a Handel march, and "Christ the Lord is Risen To-day" is sung to the martial strains of "See the Conquering Hero Comes"—an arrangement suggested by an accident, for Mr. Wesley says that when he was preaching in Ashbourne Market-place in 1774, the people "mistook the tune, and struck up the march from 'Judas Maccabeus.' I know not when I heard so agreeable a sound."

3. To these adaptations were added original contributions, for by this time Methodism had produced musicians as well as poets. When Wesley was asked, "What are you to do with a musician at the theatre who has given up all for Christ?" he replied, "Let him write tunes for the Methodists?" Thus J. F. Lampe, writer of burlesque and comic opera, and author of a manual on "Thorough Bass," became a Methodist music composer. Sixteen of his tunes are included in "Sacred Harmony."

4. A fourth feature of the book is the frequent use of the minor mode—39 out its 115 tunes are couched in the minor key. But, as the Rev. L. Wiseman has pertinently pointed out, when it is re-

membered that one-fifth of the hymns in Wesley's book were penitential hymns, for which the minor scale is so singularly suitable, we are not surprised that one-third of these tunes should so pleadingly wail and tenderly sob. Of course, the minor key can strive, march and exult. "Leoni" is a fair example of this. But it is strange to modern ears to find "Happy the Man that Finds the Grace," and "My God, I am Thine," sung to minor tunes.

5. The simplicity and strength of melody is another characteristic, and Wesley followed a true musical instinct when he insisted upon having a dominant melody. He was justified both by wisdom and by art, Gluck and Wagner being his witnesses.

6. The last outstanding feature of the music of this publication is its formal or structural marks, nearly half the collection being in triple time, and quite frequently the last line repeating—and occasionally a half-line—as a kind of coda.

Needless to say, tunes with such repeats were often destructive to poetic sense, and sometimes disastrous to decorous worship. The tune "Job," for example, in more recent days, has wrought sad havoc on many an innocent congregation in the singing of such lines as: "To hear Thy dic—to hear Thy dictates and obey"; or "Thy love hath an—

Thy love hath ani-mating power!" What would happen with such a line as "Thou art my bulwark and defence"; or, "Oh! for a mansion in the skies." may be better imagined than described. The almost solitary survival in modern Psalmody of this decadent type of tune is "Miles Lane," the use of which is almost uniformly restricted to its special hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesu's Name." Sometimes, however, it does service as an ordinary "common metre" tune; but usually to the distress of preacher, and discomfiture of people, as in, for example, a final line like this: "And more ex—— more ex—— more exults our joy."

Notable excerpts from this typical early Methodist collection of tunes appear in the present book:—"Hotham" (106), John Wesley's tune to "Jesu, Lover of My Soul!"; "Helmsley" (200), really an old English hornpipe, but now inseparable from "Lo! He Comes"; "Old Twenty-third" (362), which is essentially typical of characteristic Methodist feeling and fervour; "Derbe" (930), which, for many reasons, must ever remain the only possible tune to "Come, Let Us Anew." Several others also find a place in the appendix.

The next advance and natural successor of "Sacred Harmony" was

"THE COMPANION TO THE WESLEYAN HYMNBOOK."

But what would any theory of evolution be without a missing link? Therefore, if in tracing the ascent of Methodist music I miss this link, I shall not be deemed wholly unscientific! Let me rather, however, dismiss it with the brief mention that it appeared in 1846, and contained 228 tunes, with references to the words. After thirty years of good service it was superseded by the

"WESLEYAN HYMNBOOK AND NEW SUPPLEMENT,
WITH TUNES,"

when an entirely new feature marked Methodist Psalmody, the hymns and set tunes appearing together. This collection and arrangement was of great advantage, and showed a considerable advance upon its predecessors; but it can scarcely be said to have been an entirely satisfactory production. Doubtless the difficulties in its editorship greatly embarrassed the committee. Dr. Gauntlett died as the work was in progress; his successor, Mr. Geo. Cooper, died before its completion; and the third editor, Mr. E. J. Hopkins, had simply to carry out and supervise other men's plans.

In Psalmody, as in other subjects,

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be."

And so the more spacious thought and growing experience of modern Methodism demanded an up-to-date manual of devotional music, which is now supplied us in the present production:—

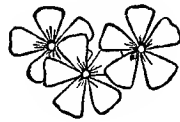
“THE METHODIST HYMNBOOK, WITH TUNES.”

I have very imperfectly sketched the rise and traced the course of this great river. Many tributary streams have flowed into it, which, perforce, in so hurried a survey, could not be noticed.

In closing, permit me to disarm the criticism of a current objection. A twofold exception has been taken to its title, and its claim to that title, “The Methodist Tunebook.” That title is surely more than justified, and its claim stands amply vindicated. 1. It is Methodist in *spirit*, preserving and presenting, as it does, the best typical traditions. 2. It is Methodist in *scope*, adapting and incorporating, as it does, the distinctive elements and characteristic traits of the best collections of minor Methodism, as embodied in the very excellent Hymnals of both the Bible Christian and Primitive Methodist sections of the Methodist host.

I can only hope that its reception and adoption may be at once cordial, common, and complete. If our Methodist devotional fellowship is to realise its present-day possibilities, we shall need the richest

poetry and the most ravishing music as its exponent, and, these provided, our “hours of insight” and “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” shall be both multiplied and magnified, and we shall raise to vastly higher spiritual signification the eternal but progressive function of divine worship.



METHODIST MUSIC.

II. THE FUNCTION OF THE ORGANISM.

“There is in Souls a sympathy with sounds.”

—COWPER.

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“Music is the child of prayer, the companion of religion.”

—CHATEAUBRIAND.

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“A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for some moments gaze into that !”

—CARLYLE.

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“Thou, Lord art the Father of music ;
Sweet sounds are a whisper from Thee ;
Thou hast made Thy Creation all Anthems,
Though it singeth them silently ;
But I guess by the air of this music
What raptures of heaven can be,
Where the sound is Thy marvellous stillness,
And the music is light out of Thee.”

—G. S. FABER.

METHODIST MUSIC.

II THE FUNCTION OF THE ORGANISM.

The proper place of music in Methodist worship is a subject around which gathers a growing diversity of opinion, and the object of this paper is to discuss the question, Why do we employ music in worship, and what ideal purpose is it supposed to serve?

Bearing in mind our definition of worship, as stated in a previous study, as "the effort of the human soul to realise and partake of the Divine presence and life," it will be readily understood from this point of view, what limitations are at once put upon our conception and treatment of music in Methodist worship.

But first, what is music? Technically, simply a combination of sounds in succession having the property of pitch, and so arranged to please the ear; nevertheless, there remains a something unexplained by the terms of such a definition. To speak, then, of music in the cold formula of acoustics as "vibrations of air caused by strings or pipes" is only to stutter the alphabet of its language. Who shall describe how these vibrations pass the auditory nerves and penetrate the spirit, stirring it with ecstatic motions, moving the mind to noble thoughts, peopling the imagination with fairy fancies, and ploughing the depths of human nature with inexpressible feelings? As yet music is miraculous. "What science brings so much out of so little?" asks Newman. "There are seven notes in the scale; make them fourteen; yet what a slender outfit for so vast an enterprise!" Poetic perceptions as voiced by Job's description of the morning stars singing together; or Shakespeare's penetrative lines that—

"Harmony is in immortal souls,

But while this muddy vesture of decay

Doth grossly hem us in we cannot hear it;"

or philosophical theories like Plutarch's doctrine of the music of the spheres; or Schopenhauer's conception of the "World as Will and Idea," are all

suggestively summed up in Carlyle's massive and yet exquisite interpretation—"All things are melodious. See deep enough, and you will see musically; the heart of Nature being musical."

But the universal heart of man passes beyond scientist, philosopher, or poet, and bows itself before the rhythmic harmony of human nature, and turning from the world without finds in the world within the same principle embedded in the essence of its being. Therefore, for all practical purposes, the best definition of music is that which is at least indefinite—viz., "the language of emotions," expressing "thoughts that oft do lie too deep for tears," and interpreting feelings which mind cannot penetrate nor words express, as Richter says, "Telling of things we have not seen and shall not see."

Without discussing any theory of the probable origin and ultimate function of music, the immediate source and ideal purpose of music in Church worship to-day appears to be this: When the Christian worshipper comes to the sanctuary, and the idea of God, the Father Almighty, looms upon his mind, and the sense of religious awe, yet filial confidence, presses upon his heart, words are all too poor, and hence he calls for the loud cymbals, organs, harps, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to express his adoration and thanksgiving.

Obviously, the function of religious music has an end beyond that of merely ministering to the æsthetic faculty. A church is not a concert hall, and though we ask for music in worship, it is only as a means to an end. In this connection let me adapt our definition to the necessary modifications thus: Religious music is the religious language of the religious emotions, and as such may be regarded in its twofold aspect, subjectively and objectively. Music thus ministers in worship expressively and impressively.

IT EXPRESSES THE SPIRITUALITY AND THE SOCIABILITY OF WORSHIP.

(I) SPIRITUALITY.

The earliest and finest use of music was the offering of praise to the immortals by which in stately measure and solemn hymn the soul of man reached out after God, feeling after Him, if haply it might find Him; flying from the material and finite out into the spiritual and infinite. And to-day the function of music in Christian worship is to express all that we mean by soul—the contemplation of the Divine around and within us, from highest to deepest points of view. Of all the arts, music is the fittest and the only adequate means of such a realisa-

tion. Music is dematerialised energy. It lies between the spiritual and physical worlds, partaking of both, but limited to neither. Music may be prostituted to base uses, and this divine art become "procuress to the lords of hell;" but in every temple, sky, and heart lies the assertion of its function as the fittest means of praise, prayer and purification.

Every worshipper may not audibly sing, nor does every singer devoutly worship; yet, ideally, these two are one. In connection with the dedication of the Temple we read of those "who ministered before the tabernacle of the congregation with singing." To perceive the significance of the record we need to catch the central idea of priestly sacrifice. King David formed the whole tribe of Levi into a guild of various branches, one of which was employed in musical service only. The Levites chose their own leaders, some for vocal and some for instrumental music, "and Chenaniah, the chief of the Levites, was for song; he instructed about the song, because he was skilful." And so the guild was formed with its choir of 4000 performers (1 Chron. xxiii. 5), organised to maintain the worship of the Lord, not only for the people, but with the people. Music is no more to God than the fat of lambs and

the blood of bullocks, save as it is the channel through which the heart's emotions go out to God as an acceptable sacrifice of praise.

“God asks no taper lights on high surrounding,
The priestly altar and the saintly grave;
No dolorous chant nor organ music sounding,
Nor incense clouding up the twilight nave.”

Certainly not, if severed from the reality which they symbolise; but if souls are true to eternal harmonies, the sacrifice of song is acceptable and well pleasing. What a fine attestation of this is Handel's confession when asked to describe his feelings while writing the “Hallelujah Chorus”:—“I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God Himself.”

(2) SOCIABILITY, *i.e.*, THE SOLIDARITY, THE UNITY
AND VARIABILITY OF WORSHIP ACCORDING TO
OUR NECESSITIES AND MOODS.

Worship is a social, quite as much as a personal function, and unless this is fully recognised and fittingly provided for, public worship is impossible. It is the presence of this social instinct that makes public worship a necessity. How music ministers to this fundamental requirement of worship need scarcely be instanced. “Speaking to one another

in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." While this apostolic injunction may be tortured into a command for "antiphonal" singing, I modestly suggest that congregational singing is here the essential idea. The ideal of worship in this respect is music of such a kind that "everything that hath breath may join in," and a "joyful noise," even though slightly inharmonious, is a more appropriate contribution than an attitude of decorous and disappointed listening.

But probably, the ideal worshipping church, far from being without a choir, would be pretty much all choir. The very first principle of the church is fellowship; then of necessity its worship must be socially expressed. There is no medium through which our common hopes and aspirations, our characteristically deepest feelings, find their necessary social expression other than music. As S. A. Barnett has aptly put it—"Music then would seem fitted to be in this age the expression of that which men in their inmost hearts most reverence. Creeds have ceased to express this, and have become symbols of division rather than of unity! Music is a parable, telling in sounds which will not change of that which is worthy of worship, telling it to the hearer just in so far as he by nature and circum-

stances is able to understand it, but giving to all, that feeling of common life and assurance of sympathy which has in old times been the strength of the church. By music men may be helped to find God, Who is not far from any one of us, and be brought again within reach of that tangible sympathy—the sympathy of their fellow-creatures.”

“How often,” remarked Beecher, in his own peculiar vein, “how often, in looking forward to the Friday night meeting, has my prevailing thought been, not of what I was going to say, but of the hymns that would be sung! My prayer meetings consist largely of the singing of hymns which are full of praying, and my predominant thought in connection with our gatherings is ‘Oh! that sweet, joyful singing!’”

IMPRESSIVELY

music in religious worship suggests the mood, interprets the thought, and inspires the action of the worshipper.

(I) ITS POWER OF SUGGESTION.

Of all the agents of suggestion, music is the most powerful, because most direct. There is more æsthetic in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in your philosophies. And music leaves all her sister arts

behind in her direct action on the imagination. Let me remind you of three illustrations of this. Recall Goethe's picture of Faust lifting the cup of poison to his lips. As he does so, the Easter bells are heard with a chorus of angels. His heart's door is unlocked; sacred memories of the past dart before him, reminding him of the days when "chimed the deeper sounding bell, and prayer was bliss." Take Browning's Pippa, and see the little Italian mill girl moving about the city, singing her simple songs, which by suggestion turned the thoughts of men and women, including a Bishop, an artist, and guilty lovers, at critical moments into new channels. "One day," remarks Mr. Haweis, "noticing a very poor and aged woman in tears during the service, I spoke to her at the close, and enquired the cause of her grief. 'Oh, sir,' she replied, 'that blessed, blessed song in the middle of the prayers!' She could say no more; but she was alluding to an anthem by Sir Sterndale Bennett—'O Lord, Thou Hast Searched Me Out!'"

How often is the mood of a service determined by the impression created by the organ voluntary and the opening hymn? How little is it recognised by preacher, organist, choir, and congregation that to their music is given the keys of the kingdom of heaven to open and to shut?

(2) ITS POWER OF INTERPRETATION.

The music of the church—hymns, chants and anthems—should be interpretative of the great spiritual thoughts underlying them. Not infrequently, most unsuitable tunes are sung to the hymns, and the chant is regarded as an unintelligible gabble, with a musical cadence at the end of every two lines. Out of jingling rhymes the most charming music cannot produce great thoughts, but presupposing that the words sung do, as ought to be always the case, represent some worthy aspect of religious truth, then with “perfect music set to noble words” ideal congregational singing may be expected. I emphasise congregational singing as the *sine qua non* of social worship. Still, one cannot belittle the excellent interpretative gifts of a specially trained choir. To sing great and beautiful thoughts into other people’s hearts is the office and privilege of the choir in that part of divine worship allotted to the anthem. The anthem is, or should be, some great thought of God illumined by music’s art, and interpreted by souls that perceive the inner contents of both words and music, thus approximating to Beethoven’s conception when he wrote, “Nothing can be more sublime than to draw nearer to the Godhead than other men, and to diffuse here on earth these godlike rays among

mortals. What is all this (referring to his own majestic music) compared with the grandest of all masters of harmony above?"

(3) ITS POWER OF INSPIRATION.

We sing not as pagans, and religious music is more than a refined amusement. Some of the world's grandest preaching has been heard and felt in the singing of the noble hymn. The subtle triumph of music moves to deeds. When one Greek orator spoke men said, "What a noble speech!" but when another spoke after him men looked on each other, grasped their swords and said, "Let us march on Macedon." So have we felt scores of times under the subtle and moving influence of religious music. The clarion sound ceased, and we went forth to march. Witness Augustine's introduction of Christianity into England, the "Lollards" of Wyclif's time, Luther's hymn, the Methodist Revival, all of which events attest the power of Christian music and its inspiration in worship.

In view of the foregoing positions, I can sum up my argument best by calling attention to the following desiderata. Religious music should be ardent in motive, appropriate in character, and artistic in treatment.

(I) ARDENT IN MOTIVE.

“Sing unto God,” says the Psalmist. “Making melody in your hearts,” adds the Apostle. The heart is the fountain of music. Music is heart throbs. A great master has given the secret of artistic playing thus:—“Educate the heart; educate the heart.”

2. Religious music should be

APPROPRIATE IN CHARACTER,

subservient to the end of worship. Our daily business should be religious; but we do not think, for this reason, that we should bring our bank-books and ledgers to church; even the collection plate jars upon us at times, as savouring of something not exactly in its proper place. Similarly classical music is always classical music; but a gavotte, or invitation to a waltz, or an overture to an opera, while excellent as music, would be utterly out of place as an opening voluntary, an invitation to prayer, or as an aid to the distinctively religious feeling, just as either “He was despised and rejected of men,” or “Yankee Doodle!” would be out of place as a wedding party are leaving the church.

The musical portions of our service should be in keeping with the highest thoughts and deepest feelings in worship. Time was, not many years past, when worship was doleful, as though brightness and

joy were allied to sin. Happily, we have got rid, for the most part, of this characteristic, and our danger lies in an opposite extreme—in so-called hymns which lack meaning and music, which are simply maudlin. An anecdote is told of the late Paxton Hood to the effect that he had engaged to preach at a strange church, and as he entered the pulpit, the deacon who announced the hymns was giving out those very lurid lines, which it surprises us to think were ever intended for singing—

“My thoughts on awful subjects roll—
 Damnation and the dead,”

when Mr. Hood started up, and in his shrillest tones exclaimed—“Stop! stop! My thoughts do not roll on any such subject—

“‘Come, let us join our cheerful songs
 With angels round the throne.’”

(3) ARTISTIC IN TREATMENT.

Worship should be the antithesis of vulgarity. We should worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and behold the beauty of the Lord; yet, when one thinks of the mass of vapid, frivolous trash that passes muster for religious music, one wonders whether a bald, austere, Puritanic service would not

be preferable to the mawkish drivel now frequently incorporated in church worship.

Be it remembered the schoolmaster is abroad, and art is now the people's minister. To prince and plebeian, scholar and artisan, philosopher and farmer alike, she holds out her gifts. The development of the artistic faculty and the now popular perception and appreciation of the principles of beauty insistently call for an elevation of the ideal in the type and style of Music in Methodist Worship.



METHODIST RENEWAL;
OR
MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER
REVIVAL?

I. THE EXPRESSION OF IT.

“Methodism was born when John Wesley’s heart was ‘strangely warmed.’ Genial currents that had been frozen were thawed and unloosed, and the waters of life began to flow in quickening and beneficent ministry.”

—J. H. JOWETT.

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“I came to see that it was not worth while being a Minister unless I could get the old Wesleyan note into my ministry. It is so easy to lapse into comfortable ways and lose the old appeal of the Gospel.”

—W. J. DAWSON.

METHODIST RENEWAL; OR, MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER REVIVAL?

I. THE EXPRESSION OF IT.

The question is asked: "If we are living under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, and if He still moves individual men and moulds religious movements, why may not we in Australia realise our prayer, and witness the old-time and otherwise repeated experience of religious revival?" With chastened, throbbing, yet docile hearts let us approach this timely and all-important question, and discuss it in sober reason and calm faith. It is not enough to answer it—or rather silence it—by replying, in the language of pious platitudes, that our Father knoweth the times and seasons, and that we must

therefore wait until it pleases God to send a revival; it pleases God now, and waiting grieves Him; or that we must tarry for Pentecostal baptism and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit; Pentecost has come, and the Spirit then given has never been withdrawn; or that without Christ we can do nothing; we are not without Christ, He is with us always, even to the end.

It is not enough to rest in a slough of sluggish content by quoting our Master's words: "The wind bloweth where it listeth," etc., for meteorology has its laws and principles, and the same highest authority has told us that we can discern the face of the sky, and ought therefore to read the signs of the times. True, the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation; neither can we say, "Lo, here! or lo, there!" but although the laws of spiritual probabilities may not be so easily discoverable as averages in the sphere of physical operations, nevertheless, if the golden thread of a Divine purpose and plan runs through the warp and woof of Divine government and spiritual life, it is not unreasonable to expect that it will reveal its presence somewhere and somehow.

And surely the query: "May we expect a revival in Australia?" comes home to our hearts with fresh

force, precise point and persisting pressure, by the facts submitted in the present experience of large communities in Christendom—the factual history of Wales, of large spaces of Great Britain, America and India. Our English exchanges have brought us the gratifying intelligence that the net increase in British Wesleyan Methodist membership for the year ending last March is 10,705, and the Primitive Methodist Conference also reports an increase of over 5000 souls for the year. These are only typical instances; and from our reading of the signs of the times we are warranted in the conclusion that two things are self-evident to-day—viz., that the world needs and the Church wants a revival. Our own local conditions demand this, and our hearts are desiring it. May we expect it?

While eschewing paltry platitudes, we dare not despise cardinal commonplaces; therefore, “lest we forget,” let us recall, in simplest style and with directest purpose, some fundamental facts on which religious revival, so earnestly desiderated and demanded, is based.

The Acts of the Apostles furnishes us with a revelation, not only of the primitive type, but of the permanent ideal of the Christian Church. The life, experience, conditions, and history therein disclosed

are not incidental—save in form, at times—but essential—always in spirit. Now, we are in the same kingdom of grace, under the same dispensation of the Spirit, governed by the same spiritual laws; and therefore, if our life, experience, and history fall short of Apostolic Christianity, in richness of content and fulness of power, in intensity, expansion and result, that deficiency is evidence of a deplorable decadence, a reversion to type, and is, so far, a revelation of abnormal Christian conditions.

But that apostolic life was a record of perennial revival, a course of constant conquest, a result arithmetically expressed in ever-increasing ratios. How quickly the 12 became 120; then a “multitude”; then 3000; then 5000. We read that “the Lord added unto them daily,” and that “the apostles were multiplied greatly.” Evidently, the contents of the term “revival”—contents which appear to us to-day as phenomenal and occasional—then constituted the normal plane and constant condition of Christian experience. Christian life is organic, and the Church was the organism, and hence it grew. Development, reproductiveness, and expansion are the inevitable marks and natural results of life.

While increase is no infallible criterion of “revival,” it is its indubitable sign. Some additions are

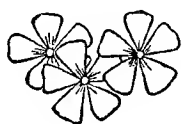
only accretion, and Church agencies may oft be multiplied while spiritual strength and religious vitality decline; and, on the other hand, we recognise that no tabulation of mere numbers can represent the whole realised spiritual work of the Church. Still, revival expansion will tell its own tale, and expansion ought to be our present experience.

We do not overlook our "casualties," comprising deaths, removals, emigrations, backslidings, and so forth. To fill up these gaps and repair the loss of our annual wear and tear requires considerable additions, in order to avert deplorable decrease. Our own age—like every other—has its specific difficulties in the way of numerical progress, and these, with a great organisation like Methodism, even in this State, are huge, combined, and recurrent. But, despite these drawbacks and difficulties, our numerical advancement should and might be vastly greater than it is or has been. There are more unconverted people in Australia to-day than when our first religious operations commenced here. And when we reflect on our modern advantages—our growing intelligence, our increased material appliances, our numerous, well-established, and commodious churches and schools, and better adapted agencies—we must confess that these ought to yield a greater

result than at any previous period in our history. Our small additions, or limited increase, is grave cause for alarm, calling forth humility, consecration, and high resolve. Our present condition forcibly reminds us of a prayer uttered by a Methodist of a past generation:—"Oh Lord, our next move must be *up*; the state of things now is about as *low* as it can be."

But "revival" is not exhausted by mere external expansion. Religious revival is always more than ecclesiastical existence. It means additions of souls, not symbols merely, of converted men, not collective machinery. Indeed, if we mistake not, our machinery just now is in excellent state of repair. Many departments of our Church organisation are realising manifest and gratifying results. We have within the bounds and under the jurisdiction of our Australasian General Conference 2567 Methodist Churches, with 640,855 attendants at public worship. We have 2442 Sunday schools, with 221,534 teachers and scholars. Our Christian Endeavour societies are numerous and active, bent upon achieving their "clear purposed goal" of "organising, vitalising, and evangelising." Our Home and Foreign Mission spirit is full of service and promise. Our great secondary schools are flourishing,

and, what is better, there is a spiritual uncontent and aspiration, a soul hunger and Christly passion distinctly recognisable. But numerical as well as financial, mechanical, or even spiritual increase ought to be realised by us on a vastly grander scale. The fisherman estimates his success not by his desire to catch fish, nor his knowledge of waters, nor by the fathoms of net put out into the deep, but by the quantity of fish he takes. "I will make you fishers of men." "I will increase you with men like a flock." "The Lord added day by day unto them." That promise is unto us and our children. Why is it not fulfilled?



METHODIST RENEWAL;
OR
MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER
REVIVAL?

II. THE NEED OF IT.

“The Fruits of the Revival were seen in Prison Reform, in the agitation of the Emancipation of the Slaves, in a Revival of Political Ideals.”

SYLVESTER HORNE.

* * * * *

“Although the career of the elder Pitt and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they must yield, I think, in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield. The creation of a large, powerful, and active sect, extending over both hemispheres, and numbering many millions of souls, was but one of its consequences. It also exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even upon the course of its political history.”

—W. H. LECKY.

METHODIST RENEWAL; OR, MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER REVIVAL?

II. THE NEED OF IT

Wesley once said that he did not wish Methodism to become a sect, and especially not a party in dogmatic theology. The first part of that desire was not granted. It has become a sect. But he went on to say further: "I want it to be a revival of spiritual Christianity, and still continue to influence, perhaps permanently, the Christian world." That must still be the object of our hopes and labours. We must show to the world that Methodism is more than a sect; that it is a life to influence all thought and all men; that it is a revival of spiritual Christianity. Luther once said, "No revival lasts more than thirty years." But this has remained five times thirty

years, and is still throwing out branches laden with spiritual fruit and leaves for humanity's healing, and will continue to do so while it abides in the Vine. Given the "warmed heart," the world-wide parish will not perish for want of the evangel of life.

Methodism, ideally, is dominated by the spirit of evangelism, her supreme and conscious effort being evangelistic. To this she is divinely commissioned, and must be fully committed. While maintaining her organised life she must throw herself ever into aggressive labour for others. Methodism as a purely professional Church is an impossibility. When Methodism begins to live to herself, she will begin to die. A generating centre of spiritual forces, she must be judged by her influence on her times and surroundings. And in proportion to the vigour of her life within will be the evidence of her power without. The motive, measure, and means of her growth and expansion are resident within her very life itself.

She cannot rest on the laurels won without losing them, and without confessing that her work is done and her end near. The world can very readily spare Methodism if she is unable to meet the demands of a time like this by doing righteous and valiant

service at the present hour. She is confronted by hostile forces of enormous strength and immense magnitude, which plainly indicate that her work is only begun and will not be easily completed. Therefore, she dare not live in a fool's paradise. Her faith lives by conquest. Before the inherent necessity and prime importance of renewed life and revived vigour, all other desiderata fade into relative insignificance.

The sublime achievements of past progress, with the opulent advantages of the present position, call forth devout gratitude and justifiable gratification; but be it remembered that, after all, progress is relative. The object in running a race is not merely to run fast, but to run fastest. Is Methodism getting abreast of our ever-increasing population? Assuming that Methodism reaches one-seventh of the population of these States, the Christian Church is still in a minority, and no Christian who has a spark of faith in his Christ's Gospel, and no Methodist who has a sincere sympathy with his Church's mission, can fold his arms in a spirit of sweet content while more than half his neighbours are without God and without hope in the world. However we may manipulate the census of religious worshippers, the fact remains that the masses are outside God's

House. The political motto of Lord John Russell, "Rest and be thankful," will never do for us.

Great and varied as is the activity of Methodism, the agencies of evil against which she contends are far more subtle and sleepless. Privileged as is our country, in it is a Dead Sea, on whose dreary shores the fruits are bitter indeed. Unbelief, dogmatic and belligerent, and a worldliness charitable to evil and credulous to good, like Herod and Pilate, combine to slay vital spiritual religion. Sensuality, scepticism, and materialism lounge in clubs, pollute our literature, and parade our thoroughfares.

Vice of every form finds congenial atmosphere, while sin, æsthetic and refined, gross and bestial, mocks the zeal and laughs at the purity of the Christian religion. No longer need cynics quote the amended fourth commandment of Clough's revised "Decalogue":—

"At Church on Sunday to attend

Will serve to keep the world thy friend"

—for no longer do the people even go to worship from the motive of respectability. According to the modern conventional code of the "smart set," it is just as respectable to play golf, give a card party, or hold a reception on Sunday. The Holy Day has become to many merely a holiday.

These very conditions constitute a challenge, and a call to Methodism to put on the whole armour of God. The country's spiritual exchequer is low. The modern extremity is Methodism's opportunity. Her immediate task, precise and pressing, is to again renew the Nation, "to create a soul beneath the ribs of death." We need a revived sense of God, in which mammonism and sensuality, drunkenness and gambling, political jobbery and commercial chicanery will receive their death-blow. The blatant scepticism of Haeckel and the sordid socialism of Blatchford are only evidence of our lost grip of the spiritual forces, and they will be better answered by a revival of religion than by all the ponderous artillery of controversial polemics. From crowded city street and solitary bush track comes a loud call for tenderest pity, fervent prayer, and active zeal, and surely the men and women of Methodism cannot be deaf to its appeal. Even an Agnostic like John Morley admits that "in a world where men sit and hear each other groan, where but to think is to be full of sorrow, it is hard to imagine a time when we shall be indifferent to the sovereign legend of pity." To us the "sovereign legend" is a regnant reality, and that not of pity only, but of power.

It is a significant coincidence that Voltaire and Wesley were contemporaries. When these men set out on their national enterprises, England was much nearer revolution than was France. The social and political symptoms of the hour showed far greater evidences of instability and peril in England than across the Channel. But the evil which assumed so terrible a form in France England averted. By what means was England saved? Simply by the evangelistic work of John Wesley. Only the Methodist revival presented a reign of terror in Great Britain, more awful than that "red fool fury of the Seine," which desolated France. Methodism penetrated society with loftiest ideals of a sober-suited freedom, and leavened it with a moral and Christian force, creating largely the purposes and possibilities of a Christian and triumphant democracy. Instead of being splashed from end to end with fratricidal blood, England was roused from side to side with the appeal of a new moral idealism.

When now we recall the picture of those dark days, with their slumbering or shocking morals—days of war between England and her own children across the Atlantic, days of an ignorant peasantry and privileged aristocracy, days of corrupt

law, foul customs, and immoral manners—we can well understand Cardinal Manning's tribute to John Wesley and the Methodist evangelism. In that eighteenth century, when England was so corrupt that a king swore faithfulness to a dying queen by promising her that he would never marry again, but would have a mistress; when gin-shops hung out their signs, declaring that customers might get drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and have clean straw for nothing; and when the "Society for the Reformation of Manners" lost heart and ceased labour, there was a man sent of God, whose name was John Wesley, with the evangelical message of a pure Gospel, that wrought a spiritual revolution and carried with it a moral reformation.

The "revival" that saved England from the political dangers, the moral blasphemies and social sins of the eighteenth century, is needed by Australia in the twentieth century, in the interests of patriotism, progress, and idealism.

The tests of public religious bodies were never more severely applied than at present. Every religious institution must now justify its claim to existence by its external relations. It must be in harmony with public needs; it must face the people, and grapple with the everyday life of the masses.

At present Methodism is growing from within herself—increasing by propagation. The clear gain given to her from her homes and Sunday-schools is the most successful phase of her present position. The fact has been used as a taunt, it being said that “Methodism has ceased to be evangelistic, and was now only growing by propagation.” The latter part of the statement one may accept as a compliment; but the former part must never be true. As the Roman Republic, having subdued the surrounding barbarous peoples, employed them to secure further aggressions, so must Methodism first secure converts, and then make missionaries. When Napoleon was engaged prostrating ancient thrones and capturing metropolitan cities, he was asked why he was so continually at war. His reply was significant, “Conquest made me what I am, and conquest must sustain me.”

Methodism may repeat the historic aphorism. She has no other licence to live—she must conquer or be conquered. To limit her labours to areas already occupied is for her to lose her distinctive character.

Mr. Spurgeon once tersely said:—“While a Church is not bringing others in, her own heart is becoming weak in its pulsations, and her whole constitution is becoming a prey to decline. The Church

must either be fruitful or rot, and of all rotten things a rotten Church is the most offensive." So clearly was Wesley baptised with the Spirit and absorbed in this high purpose that in his well-known directions to his preachers he says: "You have nothing to do but to save souls." "Give me souls, Lord, or I shall die," was the prayer of more than one of the early makers of Methodism.

Our great need is a quickened appreciation of the transcendent worth of men as souls. How insignificant and paltry are worlds compared with souls. Hence Christ's picture of heaven's joy over a soul's salvation. So infinite His pity for it, and so high His ideal concerning it, that no cost must be spared in saving it. "For God so loved the world that He gave His Son." David Livingstone used to say that God had one only Son, and Him He gave to be a missionary. How exquisitely pathetic is that sweet symbolic picture of the Shepherd with the stray lamb on His shoulder!

If religion be the link uniting man to God, Christianity is the link uniting God to man. The gift is God's, the joy is man's. Over our wearied and sinful earth a spirit of peace is breathed, as needful and real beneath the Southern Cross as beneath the Syrian skies. Still do men cry, "Show us the

Father," and still does the bosom of the Eternal breathe, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest."

"So through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, O heart I made, a heart beats here !
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself ;
'Thou hast no power, nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me Who have died for thee."

Of this we are witnesses, and what we have felt and seen we are bound by every moral and spiritual consideration to testify. And since it is manifestly God's plan to save men by men who are themselves saved, be it ours to fall into line with God's great purpose revealed in Christ's own ministry, and incorporated in Methodism's programme as an all-consuming passion.



METHODIST RENEWAL;
OR
MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER
REVIVAL?

III. THE MEANS OF IT.

“Nought honors God like the thirst of desire,
Nor possesses the heart so completely with him ;
For it burns the world out with its swift ease of fire
And fills life with good work till it runs o’er the brim.”

—FABER.

* * * * *

“Is the general Church life of the English nation to-day characterised by devotion to an ‘ism’ or by a personal passion for Christ? Are we trying to do by water what can only be done by fire?”

—J. H. JOWETT.

METHODIST RENEWAL; OR, MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER REVIVAL?

III. THE MEANS OF IT.

Continuing our inquiry, let us now carry the question into the field of identified fact and actualised history, and therein consider the verifiable means, sources, and conditions of this devoutly wished-for consummation.

The Divine Spirit has been ever immanent in Nature, dwelling permanently within the physical sphere of the universe, brooding over its chaos, securing its order and unity, inspiring this planet with life and beauty, and at special times demonstrating His marvellous power in extraordinary creative crises and

evolutionary epochs. Never has there been a time when the Spirit of God did not seek to fulfil His matchless purpose, and never has there been a moment in which He has not been working His good pleasure in and on humanity. But there have been momentous and miraculous points when He has broken through the smooth uniformity of physical nature and providential order, and signalled His presence in the creation of extraordinary moral epochs, and the inspiration of extraordinary spiritual experience. The Old Testament dispensations mark such periods, traced broadly in the history of a specially-selected race, and also identified in the personal experiences of its greatest men. The makers of Israel realised that the Spirit of God was with them. That is the Scriptural explanation of their purity and power, their insight and exploits. He moved through them as instruments, vehicles, and media of His manifestation and ever-working activity. That His presence in that far-off time was often only vaguely comprehended, and manifestation of it often only temporary and transient, simply means that that period was one of preparation, a dispensation of discipline, to be transcended and superseded by what we designate the Pentecostal privilege, in which the Spirit became per-

manently present in Christian experience, and clearly revealed as a Person received by faith in the heart of every believer.

Now we are living in the full realisation of the Spirit's dispensation, and, parenthetically, let us note this distinction—viz., that the Spirit's manifestation which in pre-Pentecostal experience was regarded as a vague, indefinite, temporary, and impersonal force, is, in the all-encompassing glory of the Christian experience, no longer an energy, but a Person—not "it," but "Him."

We are being ever instructed and continually charmed by the recurrent reading of the record of the Acts of the Apostles, but ideally that treatise might more appropriately be designated the Acts of the Holy Ghost. It is our fullest illustration and our finest study of the practice of the presence of God. It is everywhere instinct with a Divine movement—mastering men and moulding the Church; and that movement we can neither deny, despise, initiate, nor imitate. It baffles explanation. We can enumerate some of its characteristics—the glow of fervour, the flood of passion, the cogency of convincing reason, etc.; but the thing itself eludes us. We can no more explain than we can explain away the Pentecostal speech of Peter—

its boldness, passion, and power—or the insight and service evidenced by others who so recently had shown themselves but fools and slow of heart. Surely these are proofs of the Spirit's movement more convincing than rushing wind, lambent flames, and strange tongues.

And since? Are those secret fires of Pentecost burnt out so that nothing remains but the grey ashes of an old-time memory? Has the promise of Jesus touching the permanent abidingness of the Spirit been as an idle dream? Has the Spirit, so freely and fully given, been finally withdrawn? Having pronounced the Apocalyptic "Amen," has God departed, leaving His world orphaned and His Church comfortless?

"Have things of Pentecost grown antiquated?

Is there no Spirit now that doth inspire?

Is prophecy in this our day out-dated?

Burns on our head no supernatural fire?"

No! A thousand Noes. "I have many things yet to say unto you." "The Spirit shall guide your journey." "He shall convict the world." "Your young men shall prophesy." "Greater things than these shall ye do." All this and more, "When the Spirit is come; and He shall abide with you for ever."

"We have forgotten God," said Carlyle once; "that's the matter with us." And if the modern Church is deploring her lack of increase and efficiency, the secret of her deficiency may be traced to the same source. We have forgotten the Spirit of God. How far have we the vivid, apostolic impression of the Divine Presence actually dwelling and working in and among us? Depend upon it, if that is lost, then all is lost. He added to the infant Church. He multiplied the disciples greatly. He—not they—Their fervour, eloquence, and sacrifice He used as instruments; but the hand that uses the weapon wields the power.

From a study of the "Acts" it is obvious that it is God's will, and His ideal, that His Church should be replenished and increased by an unbroken flow into its fold of those who are being saved; and if that ideal is not being realised, the question needs to burn on our hearts and consciences. Wherefore? The specific action of convicting, converting, and comforting, everywhere attributed to the Holy Spirit, is not ideally either impotent or intermittent. Then why are our modern religious results so meagre and revivals so rare? Because the Divine action is humanly conditioned. We have this treasure in earthen vessels; and both spiritual quan-

tity and Divine quality are determined by the human medium of its transmission. Thus, stagnant communities, although called Churches, may thwart the Divine purpose and render it abortive, making it both undesirable and impossible for the Spirit to multiply them. It may be that our religious experience has in it so little spiritual life that God dare not entrust us with the responsibility of guarding the souls whom He loves and would save. We may not be fit to be trusted with them, and therefore it is undesirable that we should have them.

Then it may be impossible for the Spirit to work His gracious will and do many mighty works because of our unbelief, our selfishness, our worldliness, and general moral debility. The Church is His instrument, but what if the instrument be defective? Electricity is a mighty force to-day, but it demands a proper medium for its efficiency. Our purpose and wish to flash some welcome message to our waiting friends avails not in the absence of proper conditions for its transmission. The mighty power-house is rendered weaker than a child by a damaged wire. The current is interrupted, and our friends are cut off.

Oh, let us not longer say that we must wait until it please God to give us a revival; for wherever

there is a community of living souls obviously held together by the Divine Presence and obviously reflecting His character and purposes, there will be given to them, as by a law of spiritual gravitation, souls touched by Divine grace. Given inward vigour of spiritual life, and outward expansion will inevitably follow. The Church's progress is determined by her purity. She spreads by spirituality. Historically, that has always been the case. The genius of revival is simply this: a season of deepened spiritual consciousness, followed by a season of religious expansion. When the beauty of the Lord our God is upon us, then shall our work be established. Then, whether we may expect a revival or no depends absolutely upon him what we are. Just as Emerson said of immortality: "We shall have it if we are fit for it"—so, and with greater truth, may we say of revival. When Israel cried, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord," the Divine reply came: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion." Let us be assured that a deepened religious life, a profounder spiritual consciousness, is the *sine qua non*. And that condition we may secure precisely as the primitive Christians did. Oh! for the ten days. Then **THE** day fully comes. Prayer is followed by power,

and conquest succeeds consecration. If our Churches are content with doing nothing on their knees, they must remain content with doing nothing on their feet. They may galvanise but not evangelise, and to electrify is not to sanctify.

“ ’Tis life whereof our nerves are scant;
 ’Tis life, not death, for which we pant;
 More life and fuller that we want.”

“ Oh, then wish more for Him, burn more with desire,

Covet more the dear sight of His marvellous face,
 Pray louder, pray longer for the sweet gift of fire,
 To come down on thy heart, with its whirlwinds
 of grace.”

Let us ponder the Rev. W. J. Dawson’s wise words:—

We cannot organise a revival, but we can organise ourselves. We should seek a revival of the spirit of prayer and the desire for sanctity in ourselves and our churches.

The first need is the evangelisation of the minister; the next, the evangelisation of the Church.

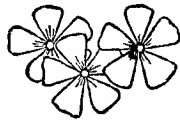
By the first, I mean that every minister must learn to preach for a revival; by the second, that every Church should be a centre of aggressive propaganda.

The note of the new time is for the minister a passion for souls, and for the Church the consécration of service of others as the dominant characteristic of the Christian life.

The revival must come in and through the Churches.

Let us use any wise method to attract the people in great special missions ; but let us, above all, use our Churches, which exist for this very purpose.

The great revival has begun, " But it is only the dawn that we see. We shall, if we are faithful, zealous and wise, see the full day."



METHODIST RENEWAL;
OR
MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER
REVIVAL?



IV THE ASSURANCE OF IT.

“ For while the tired waves vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain ;
Far back through creek and inlet making,
Comes silent flooding in the main.

And not by Eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light ;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly ;
But Westward, look ! the land is bright.”

—CLOUGH.

METHODIST RENEWAL;
OR, MAY WE EXPECT ANOTHER
REVIVAL?

IV. THE ASSURANCE OF IT.

Having discussed the nature and expression, the need and call, the means and conditions of revival, let us now penetrate to the heart of our question, and, by so doing, conclude our present study. From the positions already assumed we MAY expect a revival, because:—

1. The reign of spiritual law indicates it; and
2. The history of the Church's experience warrants it.

Christianity is an organism, and as such is subject to the great inviolable laws of life. The operations of spiritual law, if not as ascertainable, are

as certain as the operations of natural law. Fire burns and gravitation attracts, not more surely than religion spreads. Christianity is essentially pervasive and diffusive. The kingdom of heaven is as leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal. The property of leaven is to ramify and permeate the mass into which it is put, until it assimilates the whole.

The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed--which grew. Let us learn from the parable of the sower again. How prolific is good seed! And the grace of the kingdom is like to seed cast into good ground, bringing forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold. Isaiah's ploughman--that exquisite parable for religious pessimists--needs to be pondered again. Then we may catch the inspiring analogy that as the rain cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, so shall the word be that goeth forth out of God's mouth.

Professor Tyndall has declared that, "Every possible movement is tested by the question: Does it live? Which I take the liberty to translate thus: Does it grow? For growth and multiplicity constitute evidence of life." Brought to this test of law the evidences of ideal spiritual life return a full

and constant answer. Growth! "They" (God's people) "shall grow as the grass and as willows by the watercourses." "I will be as the dew unto Israel. He shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under His shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine."

And Paul exhibits the same truth as Hosea when he insists that the Church grows. Comparing the Church to a building of many parts, he will pardonably mix his metaphors rather than give the impression that the Church can be dead, and so he says it is like a building that grows.

A stagnant Church is a misrepresentation of the Divine idea and ideal of its existence. The fig tree, however full foliaged, if barren of fruit, is cursed. It cumbereth the ground, and the sooner it withers the better. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit."

Our expectancy of a revival is revived by a review of the Church's history. When surveying the swelling victories of the Gospel in his apostolic day, Paul exultingly exclaimed: "Thanks be to God Who causeth us to triumph in every place." Within

thirty years of the Crucifixion Christianity had found its way into the palace of the Cæsars; and by 70 A.D. the Gospel had been preached in all the then known world. The selfishness of the narrow-minded Jew, the sensuality of the voluptuous Corinthian, the scepticism of the philosophic Greek, the idolatries of the proud Roman, and the superstitions of the dreamy Pagan fled like affrighted vultures at the majesty of that Word spoken in the power of the Holy Ghost. And the fires of that absorbent zeal and passion burnt on in those infant Christian centuries, until Christianity bid fair to immediately fulfil its great commission and make disciples of all nations. No wonder that Constantine saw in it a symbol of victory, and went forth to conquer with its sign!

But, alas! Man has a fatal and pathetic facility for losing himself and his best treasures, and the Church's marvellous history and witness of Divine Presence and power yields to a dark era of human selfishness, and for more than 500 years not an acre of ground was won for Christ. The Church became sacerdotal and theological, and spent her years in guilty indolence or bitter wrangling instead of in consecrated and passionate endeavours to save men. "Another hundred years," said

Luther, "and all will be over. God's Word will die for the want of any to preach it." But, no; for when night is darkest, then up leap the stars. Over that chaos the Spirit of God moved, and Luther saw a "Reformation."

When, 200 years later, the moral gloom of England seemed of imperishable depth, God met the hour with the man, and John Wesley organised Methodism as a spiritual Church, and its history has been one spontaneous and protracted revival. Methodism has rescued hundreds of thousands of souls, saved a besotted nation, and a formal, sleeping Church from death. The secret of that success lies in the rich spiritual experience of those who have promoted the best evangelical efforts of Methodism. Early Methodists were men of "one book," and that, the Bible; they were men of "one idea," and that, Evangelism.

The present work of God in Wales only confirms all previous religious history. The psychologist may try to explain the phenomena on theories which exclude the operations of the direct Spiritual Presence. But his plummet fails to sound the depths of the abyss. It is the Spirit's movement. It is God reviving His work; making Himself known in the midst of these years—years otherwise dull, flat, sordid, and barren.

The "coming revival" has been for years a familiar watchword on our lips. Are we now on the threshold of its experience? From various parts of the world—Great Britain, America, and India—and from several of the States of our Commonwealth, we are hearing "Glad tidings." Within our borders God is visiting His people. Are these the prophetic signs of a great spiritual uplift and religious revival on the scale long hoped and prayed for? The conversions of thousands is no more impossible than the conversion of a single individual.

Of course, there are some who do not expect such a revival as we describe and desiderate. There are some Christian Churches that object to large and rapid ~~ingatherings~~ gatherings; but when they do get a convert there is a cackle as over a new-laid egg. There are Christian men who even denounce all revival tendencies, but who never decline to appropriate the results.

One last word. While we deprecate all attempts at "getting up" a revival, let all at this juncture be very careful to avoid every hindrance which may prevent God from sending it down. "Prove Me now herewith." "Ask, and ye shall receive." God will keep His word with us.

“ We stood amazed and whispered, ‘ Can it be
That He hath granted all the boon we sought ?
How wonderful that He hath answered us !’
O faithless hearts ! He said that He would hear
And answer our poor prayers ; and He hath heard
And proved His promise ; wherefore did we fear ?
Why marvel that our Lord hath kept His word ?
More wonder He should fail to bless
Exultant faith and prayer with good success.”



METHODISM AND THE MASSES;
OR, THE CHURCH
AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

I. CONSTERNATION.

“The common people heard Him gladly.”

—THE GOSPEL.

* * * * *

“In every place we find working men most susceptible to religion.”

—JOHN WESLEY, *at Birmingham, on Good Friday, 1785.*

* * * * *

“Under all the rough-and-tumble side of the Labour movement there is a deep religious substratum. More inspiration for the work has been drawn from the teachings of Jesus than from any other source. Many of the best and most self-sacrificing workers in the movement are men who know their New Testament almost by heart.”

—J. KEIR HARDIE.

* * * * *

“The Democracy, not unnaturally, is impatient with the Church. Probably, nay certainly, Christ is Himself. Let not the Democracy be impatient with Christ, with the Gospel, with Christianity. There is practically no other hope for the world. *Hoc signo vinces.*”

—DR. HORTON.

METHODISM AND THE MASSES; OR, THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

I. CONSTERNATION.

The Church and the masses ! The contents of the terminology are by no means novel, though concise, and are as native as they are summary. From its inception the Church has ever been in some sort of vital relation to the masses. For nineteen centuries these forces have intermingled and reacted upon each other—alike determinative of duty and destiny. They represent the two great factors in the sum of human experience and progress; and as facts, they stand to-day robust and powerful, or languishing and impotent, largely in proportion to the degrees of their reciprocal attraction and co-operative combinations.

The Church and the masses! What a sweep of its history is embraced in their conjunction! What potentialities for good or evil lie subtly hidden in the as yet undetermined exercise of their affinities. Looking back, the evangelical chronicler of the first century records: "The common people heard Him gladly." Looking round, the Christian apologist of the twentieth century enquires, "How shall we reach the masses?" Looking forward—What?

Why the change? What has occasioned the difference? Why the blank interrogation mark? Has the earlier gladsome comradeship and cordial enthusiasm been supplanted by a saddening distrust and cool indifference? Is the ultimate issue of such a breach difficult to foresee, not to say foretell, with any degree of assurance, or even probability? If so, why? Surely, on the face of it, if the Gospel be a Divine purpose and not a human blunder, whatever "good news" it had for the Jewish artisan it has for the working man of our time! And yet—let the truth be told—the masses taunt instead of trust the modern Church, and in place of reverence we find ridicule. It is a deplorable fact that the Churches have fallen into actual neglect—and instances are not wanting of practical contempt—among the working classes. The late Lord Shaftes-

bury estimated that only 2 per cent. of British working men attended any Church—Catholic or Protestant. Washington Gladden sums up his investigation of the subject thus: "The proportion of wage earners in our churches is diminishing."

The recent census, conducted by the *Daily News*, has disclosed the fact that a vast section of London's population do not go to any place of worship, that they habitually neglect attention to soul culture and spiritual life. Mr. Mudie Smith, who superintended the census of attendances at Divine worship, says that sixty per cent. of the available population is apparently apathetic, or antagonistic as regards attendance at a place of worship on a Sunday. In process of the census, the enumerators visited 2600 places of worship, 2538 of which were Christian, and 62 Jewish.

The total population of the twenty-nine Metropolitan Boroughs is 4,536,541. It is estimated that 68,492 of these dwell in institutions, such as hospitals, workhouses, prisons, etc. This leaves 4,468,049. The number recorded as having attended a place of worship is 1,002,940, which gives a ratio of 1 in 4.45 of the population. But as about 35 per cent. of those who do attend Divine Worship attend twice on the Lord's Day, this reduces the

total attendants to 850,204; and thus the aggregate attendance for the whole of London is 1 in 5.25, or 16 per cent. of the population. Further, the census shows that the smallest ratio of the population attending Church is found in those Boroughs which embrace the working class districts.

Mr. Moody, who had large opportunities of observing social phenomena, declared with his last words that "the gulf between the Church and the masses is growing deeper, wider and darker every hour." This attitude may mean nothing more than an indifference to the religion of the Churches, or it may mean, as some serious minds prophesy, "a crisis in the existing relations between the Gospel and the labour problems." Edward Salmon, writing in *The National Review*, remarks: "We are not far off the cross roads, one of which leads to a truly Christian heaven and the other to practical atheism." He pertinently asks: "Is the freethinker or the Churchman to be the pilot?" Mr. Blatchford says, "We have reached the parting of the ways."

The issue is grave. The common people are now the dominant power. Their opportunity has been long in coming, but it has come. "Henceforth," says Demos, "they reckon ill who leave out me." Henceforth all our institutions, the religions not

excluded, must be "broad based upon a people's will." It is impossible to conceive of anything more critical than this conscious sovereignty of the people. They rule, but (as Dr. Fairbairn pertinently and powerfully puts it), unless God live in and rule through the people, the end of all our long struggle and boasted progress will be chaos and death.

The alienation of the working classes from the Church is, therefore, a matter of serious and vital moment to humanity's well-being. Now, manifestly, Christianity cannot long survive without the active faith of the common people. It was they who gave the kindest welcome to Jesus, clung to His person, hung upon His lips. It was their support that secured the early triumphs of Christianity; and, to-day, it is palpably true that the real strength of the Church is found in the lowly, common people. Abraham Lincoln used to say that "God must have loved the common people because He made so many of them." The working men of to-day are worth the life-blood of the Church, and, in their conversion, lies the greatest of all modern possibilities. How shall we reach them? They will not be conciliated by ecclesiastical patronage or won by ingenious tactics. The Church that seeks to win the

working man, simply that it may crowd its services, buttress up its power, or parade its success, will fail as ignominiously as it deserves to fail. The masses can be won, but only by a spirit, as unselfish as the Gospel which the Church has to preach.

The problem will not be solved by vituperative charges and counter cynicisms; the ancient and Divine proposal—"Come, let us reason together"—has more sanity of method and assurance of success.

Of course there are degrees of alienation—degrees indicated roughly by these groups, as so many natural orders, viz.:—

1. The absolutely hostile toward the Church.
2. The thoughtlessly indifferent.
3. Those who are neither hostile nor indifferent, but who, for reasons real or imaginary, voluntarily detach themselves and stand aloof from Church association.

Needless to say, it is with the second and third groups of this classification that this discussion is primarily concerned. And certainly of the third group it may be admitted that the majority of its members, as honest men, would rather be identified in some fashion with the Christian Church than be alienated and disfranchised. They clearly see that

the powers that have come into conflict with Christianity and competition with the Churches are weak, insufficient, and failing. The weary worker, disappointed with the mirage, sighs for the pool. He cannot live on chagrins and husks when he feels, somehow, that in his Father's house is bread enough and to spare. Why should he perish with an unappeased hunger? He toils and tires, but the labour and meat satisfieth not. His indomitable conscience speaks; and the low murmur of discontent sobs up from the soul its threnody—

“Where is the singer whose large note and clear
Can heal, and arm, and plenish, and sustain?”

Why, then, have these honest-hearted and weary workers broken with the Churches? If the Church holds what the worker wants, and the worker can supply what the Church needs—if the “bride says Come! and he that is athirst says Come!”—surely it is time that barrier walls were broken down and eternal wedlock consummated. Towards that idea we labour, and for its realisation we bate not one jot of heart or hope. But there are lions in the way!



METHODISM AND THE MASSES;
OR, THE CHURCH
AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

II. CONDEMNATION.

“The Christianity of the future must go back to the Gospel, as St. James in his working-man Epistle set it before us. The workers will never believe that we are their ‘brethren in Christ Jesus’ till we show them in fact that it is so.”

—G. W KITCHEN, in “*The New Party.*”

* * * * *

“Oh, what avails it, missionary, to come to me—a man condemned to residence in this foetid place ! Give me my first glimpse of heaven through a little of its light and air : give me pure water : help me to be clean : lighten this heavy atmosphere and heavy life, and then I will hear of Him whose thoughts were so much with the poor, and who had compassion with all human sorrow.”

—DICKENS (*Nobody's Story.*)

* * * * *

“Who will deny that the prevailing indifference among the masses of the people is largely due to the fact that the Churches have failed to be the guardian of collective morality ? The people feel instinctively that want and poverty are anomalies in a world in which the production of all forms of wealth has become easy and even easier. They instinctively feel that it is due to some injustice in our laws. They may be right or they may be wrong ; but inasmuch as the Churches refuse them guidance in this all-important question, they have drifted away from the Churches.

—“PROGRESS.”

METHODISM AND THE MASSES; OR, THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

II. CONDEMNATION.

The masses have a reckoning with the Church; they have actual or imaginary grievances, the utterance of which it is vain to suppress. As Burns puts it—

“A cauld wind in November blew,
A cauld kirk and in it but a few,
A caulder minister never spak;
Ye’ll a’ be warm ere I come back.”

Let us, then, examine the causes, real or apparent, which are alleged as accounting for their alienation. There are three principal charges which, with some show of reason, are, persistently and vigorously, urged against the Church.

I.—HYPOCRISY—OR SELFISHNESS V. SERVICE.

It is said that "the theological gospel of the Orthodox Church is one of selfish escape. The Church is conceived of as an ark, an asylum, a place of refuge. The apparent duty of a modern disciple is to save his own soul, and so the Church supplies illustrations of the rankest individualism and selfishness. Your churchgoing and religious exercises may or may not be good, but if these are signs of Church discipleship we care nothing for the Church." Let the Churches calmly listen to this reproach. It sounds severe; may be unwarranted; but there is much to be learned from such criticism. It points at least to defects which should be speedily remedied. The Christian duty is summed up in Christ's Word of infinite law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." No Christian is saved for himself alone. Salvation is for service and through service. "Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "As thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them."

"This was the way the Master went,

Should not the servant tread it still?"

Possibly the Churches have not accepted the severe conditions of their salvation or the full terms of their commission. They may not be as good as

their book. The hypocritical selfish disciple and smug professor, with unctuous voice and holier-than-thou attitude, much of which may be only a veil to hide his sleek jealousy and questionable conduct, is not an altogether unknown character in our Churches; though undoubtedly this type is much exaggerated in cynical criticism. Still, there are men who earnestly profess one thing and sincerely do another. The most despicable of all modern characters is Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, who aims "to make the best of both worlds," cheating both God and the devil.

"Give us this day our daily bread,
He prayed at early morn,
And then went on the Stock Exchange
To raise the price of corn."

Working men can see through this as clearly as John Ruskin when he declared, "If religion is good for anything it is good for everything." But the sons of Eli made the sacrifice to be abhorred in their day, and, alas! they have their successors now. Religion, bereft of conscience, is no religion, and we dare not but admit and express our fear that, after all excuses are made, the pulpit has largely sacrificed its ethical power in its pursuit of the critically controversial or purely emotional—of

various types. To get men to think finely, or to feel nice, once a week, is no doubt estimable, but to get men to do right all the week is more essential. To ask other people, "What would Jesus do?" is one thing; but to go out and do something one's self, spontaneously and sacrificingly, is another thing. Sentimentality and priggery will not pass muster for sincerity and piety, and so the workers oft sneer at pulpit and pew with downright contempt.

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as others see us,
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion.
What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n Devotion!"

II.—OTHERWORLDLINESS—OR HEAVEN VERSUS HUMANITY.

Otherworldliness, however beautiful for devout, contemplative souls, has little charm for the moiling masses, especially if it be associated with selfishness, unreason, and injustice. The Church's future heaven makes little appeal to them. "Give us a bit of it here," say they. The future hell gives them little fear; it is not the future, but the hor-

rible present, that troubles them. They want a gospel for the actual troublous, tragical life that now is. The present, as well as the future; earth, as well as heaven; justice, not charity—these are the essential characteristics of the only religion, that can win the consent of their mind and devotion of their heart. And to this demand the Churches will do well to take heed; for, surely, it voices an aspiration which is in accord with the real genius of Christianity! Christ's emphasis was on life. The Gospel which He commissioned His disciples to preach was this: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Here, and now! Time and earth are its scenes. At hand! The Churches have to tell that—to declare that the conditions, which are dooming so many of our fellows to squalid sorrow and sordid sin, are neither eternal nor right. Society, home, and commerce may be made sound and sweet, and existence here beautiful and bright. The programme for the next life is not out yet, and we must look, according to God's promise, for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is in heaven; but how can this come about, save by the application of the laws of Christ to the common, commercial, social and political affairs of humanity?

The Jewish artisan saw more than a new road to heaven in Christ's Gospel. It spoke of justice on earth. The modern working man does not want to call in another world to redress the uneven balance of this. He demands a gospel that can heal the wounds, reform the abuses, and meet the aspirations of human society. There is much to justify the conclusion that while "Christianity claims this to be God's world, and that God's people are to be possessors of it in Christ's name," nevertheless, the Church, by many practical inferences, teaches that it is the devil's world, and that the duty of all *poor* Christians is to get out of it as expeditiously as possible—meanwhile, to "think of the home over there," and to "sing of the realms of the blest"! Undoubtedly, in many aspects of it, our civilisation is distinctly materialistic and anti-Christian. The rapid accumulation of great wealth is its object, and we must expect to face the necessary attendant evils which land monopolies, commercial combines, political jobberies, and personal dishonesties inevitably entail upon the community. This much is now certain, that the Church, if ever content with merely preaching patience and contentment, chattering pious platitudes about sin and temptation, crime and poverty, has had its day, and can only be left

stranded on the shores of a dead past. Let us get down to the sources, the economic roots of sin. We dare not urge a diminution of pitifulness; indeed, on Christian grounds, we must not relax one effort to ameliorate the condition of the poverty-stricken by our philanthropy and charity. But let us not vainly imagine that we have discharged our duty, by disbursing doles and handing round a poor-fund box. The struggler says, in the words of the "Norfolk Ploughman"—

"It's not what I wants to be tinkered when I'm down—

It's to get up, and to keep up, and to have summat of my own;

That's the thing; and if the Boible (as them farmers do agree)

Be agen poor folk arising, then I'll let the Boible be."

III.—ECCLESIASTICISM—OR CREED V. CHRIST.

The German socialists, while professing Christ as their leader, have repudiated the Churches. Illustrating the positivist's taunt that "the Churches have not religion enough," Thoreau says somewhat extravagantly, "The only way to understand Christ is to get rid of Christianity." That there is some

truth in these paradoxes will be readily admitted. They, at least, express the fact that most forms of organised Christianity have misrepresented Christ, and stood between Him and men's devotion. The masses can distinguish between theology and righteousness, creed and character, or Church and Christ; and they will tell you that they have had enough ecclesiastical formularies, sacerdotal observances, and sectarian bigotry. Their want of sympathy with the Churches must not be construed into antipathy to the spirit of Jesus. Some are distinctly hostile to Christianity, but these are very few. The majority would rather follow the teaching of the Gospel than that of the "Clarion." The rank and file are neither sceptics nor agnostics; they are waiting for Christ, but they will not accept the Thirty-nine Articles for the one Christ. Again is heard the plea, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." And their realisation of Him will be salvation to them and all Christendom.

Surely, in the light of the foregoing indictment, we, of the modern Churches, stand condemned! "We have done the things we ought not to have done, and have left undone the things we ought to have done."

METHODISM AND THE MASSES
OR, THE CHURCH
AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

III. COMMENDATION.

“The equality of men can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common Father. Announce the sublime and solaceing doctrine of theocratic equality.”

—BEACONSFIELD (*Tancred*).

“Cut off God from the Service of man, and the long habit and inherent beauty of that service may perpetuate its customs for a few generations ; but the inevitable call must come to subject conduct to the altered conditions, and in the absence of God every man’s ideal shall surely turn from, How can I serve my neighbour ? to, How can I make my neighbour serve me ?”

—DR. G. A. SMITH (*Isaiah*).

METHODISM AND THE MASSES; OR, THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

III. COMMENDATION.

For the alienation of the masses from the active religious ministrations of the Church, the Church is, to a degree, culpable, but not wholly so. That she has not done for the working classes what she might have done, is evident; but that she has done something, much, indeed, for them, is equally demonstrated.

It was given to the Church, as the vehicle of Christianity, to assert the sacred rights of humanity. The labourer of Greece and Rome was regarded as a thing and not a man. The dicta of Cicero, that "no noble sentiment could come from a workshop," and Aristotle, that "the title of citizen belongs only

to those who need not work in order to live," and of Plato, that "manual labour was suitable only for slaves," were first controverted and disproved by the men who founded the Church. This enslaved idea of labour was emancipated by the teachers of Christianity. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen. Christ Himself was a mechanic, and from Him and His disciples came, for the first time, the elucidation of the doctrine of the brotherhood of the human race.

None but the prejudiced student can fail to see the influence of the Church, on every movement for the amelioration of the hard conditions of labour, right on from the first century to the twentieth. Before the liberties of America or Great Britain had been dreamed of, Clement declared "no man is a slave by nature." How the early Church practically cared for the people, is evidenced in the fact, instanced by Mr. Lecky in his "History of European Morals," that the first hospital was founded in the fourth century by Fabiola as an avowed Christian act. English constitutional liberty had its birth in the Magna Charta, but had there been no Archbishop of Canterbury there would have been no Magna Charta. The peasant wars of Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the outcome of the Reformation.

The testimony of that history is that the Church has shaped the customs, if not demanded the laws, that have so far swept aside the obstacles in the way of the labourers' material and moral advancement. "There is no room for doubt," said Kaufmann, "that Christianity remains the first requisite of humanity." Henry George has so clearly recognised this as to declare, "The intelligence required for the solving of social problems is not a mere thing of the intellect. It must be animated with religious sentiment. The salvation of society, the hope for the full, free development of humanity, is the Gospel of brotherhood—the Gospel of Christ."

That the Church has failed to thoroughly expound the Christianity of Christ, must be admitted; but, with all her defects and failures, can it be asserted that the work for humanity, which has borne the stamp of the Man of Nazareth, has been done by other hands than those trained in the Church? Take out of modern society the influence of the Church, and you rob it of its noblest aspects, its loftiest aspirations, its wildest reforms, and its deepest motives. John Richard Green, who "died learning," tells us that it was the Methodist revival of the eighteenth century which originated "the

steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, ignorance, physical suffering, and social degradation." Only a short time ago, that now sainted hero, Hugh P. Hughes, challenged the secularists to name a single charity or philanthropic institution sustained by them, and he affirmed that if the Churches of London were to withhold their personal service and sacrifice from the great philanthropies of the metropolis, there was not one of these institutions that would not be dead and bankrupt in six months. Of course, to some people, much of this effort may appear as a misdirection of energy, but it is, nevertheless, an evidence that there lives in the Church a throbbing interest in human welfare. Of this, the "Forward Movements," "Central Missions," "Institutional Churches," and "University Settlements," are irresistible evidence.

Never were the pulpits ringing out the blackness of the land, and ringing in the Christ that is to be, with more clear-tongued clang. True, much of our theology is belated. We oft speak with a husky voice of the dead past; but, even in this respect, there are signs of marked advance to-day. The preacher's position is felt to be a most critical and difficult one. He stands, in many respects, at the

parting of the ways—and ponders. It is cheap to sneer, as is, alas! too common, with certain critics. But this says little for their insight, or even eyesight. We are all familiar with the picture that is drawn, with sickening frequency, of the parson as a dumb dog living on the fat of the land, tolerated by the credulity of a few conscience-stricken people. There are ecclesiastics in receipt of enormous salaries, but who will venture to affirm that five per cent. of present-day clergymen can save a shilling a year on their incomes? Many are living in deplorable poverty, who, by transferring from the pulpit to literary and other pursuits their acknowledged ability and energy, could exchange penury for luxury. It is unjust to indiscriminately condemn preachers as professional loafers, preaching platitudes and peace to the rich members of their congregation. Is it a blind or false instinct that leads the struggler in distress—the striker and the sweated—to look, as he invariably does, to the minister for helpful service, suggestion and leadership? True, there are few poor people in our Churches, and in reply to that criticism a clerical wag has said, “It is not our fault that its members are not poor, for when the poor join the Churches’ ranks they generally begin to relatively

outgrow their poverty, and so cease to be poor." There is some truth in that playful diagnosis; but one may prefer to account for the absence of the poor in our Churches on a yet broader ground, and thence contend that the Churches have lost their old-time grip of Christ, and therefore they have lost their old-time grip of the people. But does it necessarily follow that if the preacher had a bigger Gospel he would have a bigger congregation, as is frequently asserted by critics? My own confession, based on observation and knowledge not altogether superficial, is that the prophets of righteousness have, not infrequently, received only a posthumous honour from labour leaders.

In this connection we cannot omit the searching question, whether working men themselves have discharged their full part towards securing the purity and serviceableness of the Church; whether they have striven to render it a complete embodiment of Christ's teaching? Have they supplied that large strength, of which they are capable, for the destruction of selfishness and sin? Supposing the contention be admitted, that the Church stands blameworthy, and that this may largely account for the alienation of the working classes, does it wholly account for it, and, if so, does it justify it? Grant-

ing that the nominal Church has, as Carlyle puts it, "wandered terribly from the point," what have we at bottom to compare with it? Perhaps it but faintly represents the mind of the Master, and but feebly labours for the realisation of His kingdom on earth. Still, the question persists, how better can any friend of humanity serve his generation than through the Church, seeking to make it what it ought to be, and what in idea it is? Shakspeare's couplet:

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not with our stars,
But with ourselves that we are underlings."

—may find an application here.

Yet, further, the seer who can discern the signs of the times is no longer alarmed by the ghost of "Otherworldliness." The Church's peril from that source has largely ceased to be; the danger lies rather in the curse of earthliness. Religion is demonstrated to-day as "a thing not so much of the stars as of the streets." The social ethics of Jesus are being illustrated in large spaces of modern Church enterprise. The struggler, who does not want to wait for heaven in another world, may be assured that there is no reason why he should. Jesus does not ask him to. But this much must be insisted on—that there can be no heaven, anywhere,

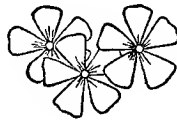
for him who lacks the heavenly mind. Improved social surroundings the masses insist upon having, and these cannot long be denied them; but be it remembered that the condition-of-the-people question is vastly more than a matter of circumstance. In fullest significance of meaning, "the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." Or, as Mrs. Browning tersely expresses it—

"It takes a soul to move a body,
E'en to a cleaner sty."

The Church is bound to witness to the Divine diagnosis of human nature, before which the nostrums of mountebanks and prescriptions of quacks are folly and mockery. John Bright used to speak of certain reformers who had discovered "a new pill to cure earthquakes." Similarly, the syrup of a merely materialistic Socialism is being offered as a veritable human panacea. Better conditions the masses demand and must have; but granting that even ideal circumstances were realised, the question would persist with pertinent point, "Is this an ideal or sufficient end?" To surround captives with statues and pictures and music; to offer them that are bound a higher wage and social betterment is, in the name of any real Gospel, the veriest trifling with human necessities. I want a clean street; but

I need a clean soul. What advantage, to any man, are easy conditions in the absence of an easy conscience? Depend upon this, that while the old sins remain they will exact the old fines. With sin undestroyed, every reform is futile and every aspiration vain. Man is more than an animal whose supreme blessedness consists in being well fed, well clothed, and well housed. And, while the Church's Gospel must, to-day, clearly recognise that the masses "have need of these things," it must not be lesser than itself, and ignore the equally fundamental truth that "man doth not live by bread alone." Looking at human nature steadily, and as a whole, the Church must insist that man needs, for the complete satisfaction of his many-sided being, much more than the provision of a Mammon's paradise of sensuous delight. His real wealth lies, not in the abundance of the things he possesses, but in the excellence of the thing that he is.

"Before earth reach her earthly best,
A God must mingle with the game."



METHODISM AND THE MASSES
OR, THE CHURCH
AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

IV. CONCILIATION.

“I do not believe that ‘the masses’ will ever be reached until true men and women, in far larger numbers and with far more system than hitherto, go among them and by individual effort cast silken chains of sympathy and brotherliness round them.”

—DR. MACLAREN.

* * * * *

“The intelligence required for the solving of social problems must be animated with the religious sentiment and warm with sympathy for human suffering. For at the bottom of every social problem we shall find a social wrong.”

—HENRY GEORGE.

METHODISM AND THE MASSES; OR, THE CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASSES.

IV CONCILIATION.

In seeking the solution of our problem, nothing will be gained by the denunciation of either pulpit or platform, the raving of either Socialist or Ecclesiastic. Reconciliation and co-operation will be secured by informing rather than inflaming each other. Nothing is more deplorable, or can be more disastrous to the common interests of both the Church and the worker than this too frequently indulged-in cross-firing over the gulf that at present unhappily separates them.

After Adam and Eve had wearied each other with mutual complaints and accusations, our great epic poet makes Adam thus address Eve:—

“But rise—let us no more contend, nor blame
 Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
 In offices of love how we may lighten
 Each other’s burden in our share of woe.”

In that Miltonic philosophy lies a wisdom, as salutary as sane, for such a time as this.

May not the real line of cleavage be found here—that the Church, in its accentuation of the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood, has largely overlooked—or only regarded theoretically—the doctrine of human brotherhood; and that social reformers, in their propagandism of human brotherhood, have rejected the Divine Fatherhood?

The Church has obeyed and insisted on the first great Commandment; the masses, the second. To this imperfect vision, and consequently, narrowed aim, may be ascribed the very pitiable separation and partial success of both. In the new world, wherein dwelleth righteousness, there are two hemispheres of truth and obligation.

Now to be specific in this appeal, to the Church let it be said that, standing face to face with this fact of the alienated working classes, and while recognising that the Church is by no means entirely culpable, still, the only mood that becomes the Church is one of humiliation. The dying prayer of

Archbishop Usher well becomes the Church: "Lord, forgive my sins, especially my sins of omission." The masses are not sceptical of Christianity, but of the Churches; and their scepticism has its source not so much in an intellectual as in a moral impression, somehow generally prevalent, that the Churches are not vital, religious realities, not bodies organised for the teaching and doing of righteousness, but rather institutions for the maintenance of vested interests and conventional respectabilities.

We must, therefore, be seized of the conviction, now general, that Christ's ethics must be applied in modern economics, and under no disguise must we shirk the grave responsibility of pointing out why they should be, and how they may be so applied. One of the greatest functions of the Christian Church is to encourage the practicable exhibition of Brotherhood in the daily relations between Employers and Employed; to impress the duty of a sympathetic understanding of each other's position, so that in place of mutual suspicion, jealousy and distrust, the more sane and Christian temper of mutual justice, consideration and co-operation may obtain. The outcome of such a transformation of spirit would be a great realisation of high social righteousness. In such an effort, those who name the name of Christ may engage with worthy hope.

If the Church is to perform its functions it must be in harmony with its environment. Politically, the Church has not kept pace with the great movements of our time. The true disciples of Jesus, whose purpose was the founding of a Commonwealth of universal comprehensiveness, cannot consistently hold themselves aloof from any movement indicative of and helpful to social progress. Christianity comes to make out of this present an ideal world, in which everyone shall be placed where in Divine justice and infinite love he ought to be. Can the Church help God in the Christian reconstruction of human society? Can it secure to labour its just share of fruits, and open to all talent the door of a career? If not, it must make room for something else that can.

“They will march prospering—though not through
our presence;
Songs will inspirit them—though not from our
lyre;
Deeds will be done—while we boast our quies-
cence,

Still bidding crouch, whom the rest bid aspire.”
Speaking some time ago, the now sainted Hugh
Price Hughes said: “In the past, Christianity has

been too individualistic; we have practically neglected the fact that Christ came to save the nation as well as the individual.

Then again, socially, the Church's attitude can be no longer one of patronage and condescension. Within the Church, class distinction should be unknown. When she bows to the rich and patronises the poor she is unfaithful to her commission, and is on the highway towards making herself and religion abhorrent in the eye of the intelligent working man. The Church, as Dr. Fairbairn points out, "knows only 'man'; hence the terms 'master and servant,' 'capital and labour,' denote relations which the Church cannot recognise save in the spirit of conciliation. A Labour Church is a creation of despair rather than of hope; 'an attempt to sanctify an evil rather than to cure it.'" The masses must be treated as "men," with human rights, and not as "classes," for social specialisation. Gilded places of worship for the rich and better-educated classes, and bare mission halls for the uncultured poor, are entirely monstrous and mischievous. If there be any place where the rich and poor should meet together on equal terms it is the house of God. Whatever else the house of God is, it is the home of the people. We may compromise matters by building

mission halls, but this only accentuates the difference and increases the difficulty. In other respects also, this want of adaptation to environment by the Church is alarmingly apparent. But, alas! we have been slow to recognise this.

Let us judge ourselves, that we anticipate and disarm the judgment of others. The remedy for all these manifest defects lies in a nearer approach to our Divine Master. We need the "secret and method of Jesus"; let us reflect Him; and holding Him forth as He lived and died, as He moved in Judea, the Helper, Friend, Brother, and Saviour of men, we shall discover that He has lost none of ancient power, but is as able in this twentieth century as in the first to move the conscience, melt the heart, and captivate the will of the common people. His Gospel is complete to the standard of perfectness for all humanity's necessities. Let us prove that it is a Gospel of Reality, of Brotherhood, of Conscience and of Service. His unique Personality is as of yore, the dynamic to demonstrate the fulness of His gracious message, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."



THE MISSION OF METHODISM.

“Let no man here believe that the golden age of Methodism lies behind us. It lies before us. In Australia we are but four millions in population, but we have a larger Methodism than there was in all the world when John Wesley died.

—W. H. FITCHETT.

* * * * *

“Thou that art born into this favored age,
So fertile in all enterprise of thought,
Bound in fresh mental conflicts to engage :
Be not thy spirit contemplation-fraught,
Musing and mourning ! Thou must act and move,
Must teach thy children more than thou wast taught,
Brighten intelligence, disseminate love
And, through the world around, make way to worlds above.”

—LORD HOUGHTON.

THE MISSION OF METHODISM.

A remarkable convergence of notable events, such as the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth and the consummation of Methodist Union concurrent with the dawning decade of the twentieth century, forces the conviction that

“New occasions teach new duties,”
and compels us to earnestly consider the present mission of Methodism in Australia, and to ask ourselves whether Methodism is destined to contribute as much to the righteousness of the nation and all that makes for its welfare, under the new conditions as under the old?

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways.”

The marvellous development and characteristic tendencies of these spacious times have an important bearing on our essential existence and specific work. No age has been so opulent in signs as this, and in proportion to our docility and insight may they be interpreted. God, who has spoken at

sundry times and in divers manners, is still breathing upon us, as we are able to bear, the many things He has yet to say. Therefore we are bound to take into account the time and circumstance under which we are to-day called to live and to serve. Our prime duty is to trace God's purpose as projected upon the pages of His Word, and interpreted by Providence and contemporaneous history. Our present advantages are neither few nor slight, and we devoutly exclaim, "What hath God wrought?" The experiences of every variety, manner, and condition of evangelisation is ours. Missionary enterprise is no longer an experiment. During the past century the world has been bound by leagues of cable—and

"By gold chains about the feet of God."

To-day, as never before, we know what is needed, as the broad outlines of the Divine purpose become hourly, more clearly discernible in the signs of the times. Now we hail with yet more hearty greeting that—

"One far-off Divine event,

To which the whole creation moves,"

when "God shall be all and in all."

Christ alone can save the world, but Christ cannot save the world alone. God is beseeching men by us. "Now are we ambassadors." "Ye are a royal priesthood." Methodism is no mere human

institution. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Our place and sphere are God-appointed.

Contrasting the equipment and opportunities of Methodism to-day with those of a hundred years or even a generation ago, we see an advance, which is a sign of God's approval and a clear call to His service. The nineteenth century is an inspiration; the twentieth is a responsibility. Now, as never before, is the opportunity of that glorious Evangel which it is our privilege to publish. Time has demonstrated the unique supremacy of Jesus; the logic of events has exposed the counterfeit and manifested the true, the only answer to the questions, the sorrow, and the sin of the human heart. "For other worlds there may be other words; the word for this is Christ."

We have a theology broad enough to save humanity—

"O that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace."

We have an organisation plastic enough to be in apostolic spirit "all things to all men, if by any means we can save some."

"What shall I do to make it known

What Thou for all mankind hath done?"

We belong to that

“Sect which hath no dread of death,
 But will spend life and breath and gold and
 pains
 To succour any wretch, because we hold
 That Christ did die for him.”

We are grateful to God for our past history and achievements; nor are we ignorant of the strength and influence and consequent vantage ground which Methodism has to-day reached. We venture the conviction that “Methodism has an interpretation of Christ to the “new Era” of a distinct character, clear note, and unique charm; and because the characteristic genius of Methodism is not of any accidental kind, it is our precise and pressing duty no less than our high and holy privilege to devoutly reflect upon the place of Methodism in Australian life at this juncture.

I.

IT HAS AN INTELLECTUAL MISSION.

The degrading curse of ignorance has been removed; the birthright of our citizens includes the opportunity of education, and that without respect to the erstwhile disabilities of sect or sex.

“Knowledge comes and wisdom lingers,”
 and man rejoices in the heritage of the mental wealth and progress of the greatest intellectual era in the world’s history. With respect to this we have a twofold duty to discharge—viz., To witness that

education is not now, and never can be, a social panacea or moral millennium—" Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am nothing "; nevertheless our appreciations of its services are well-merited and sincere. Methodism was born in a University, and has ever found culture a helpmeet and not a hindrance, an ally and not an enemy.

Whilst, therefore, we expect less from modern intellectual tendencies than some claim, we urge our right to expect more than others do. We expect Methodism to meet the demands of the present occasion, and realise all the splendid responsibilities of the new situation. An educated populace demands an educated ministry. " The priest's lips must keep knowledge."

Our responsibility in connection with the religious education of the two hundred thousand young people entrusted to our Sunday schools for spiritual guardianship, service, and love, is being earnestly considered by us, and we turn with ardent expectancy to our teachers and scholars for a growing appreciation of that light and sweetness which it is peculiarly their privilege to enjoy and utilise.

The exceptional educational facilities and brilliant successes of our great Collegiate Schools call forth our grateful congratulation. The youth of

Methodism have worthily responded to the splendid scholastic provision made for them.

The advancement of learning brings to us a grave charge, but who shall estimate the moral and spiritual gains realisable in the modern mental attitude and aspiration?

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,
But vaster.”

II.

IT HAS A SOCIAL MISSION.

A justification of Christianity other than that which learning can furnish is strenuously urged. Material difficulties, or, to use the much-abused phrase, “Social problems,” are being thrust upon us by the stern facts of our rapidly progressive civilisation, which demand that if Christ and not Cæsar is to be King of the modern conscience, then Christianity must be practically applied. Religion can no longer be regarded as something separable or apart from human material interests. The redemption of earthly life and the salvation of human society must henceforth be included in the Church’s mission. Methodism was begotten of “sympathy with human sorrow and sin.” It exists to save men. Our future usefulness will be largely determined by

our competency to meet the test of social exigency. The followers of Him Whose aim was the reconstruction of human society on the basis of a reasonable love can never hold themselves aloof from the problems of social well-being. To heal all wounds, reform the abuses, and respond to the aspirations of humanity is an instinctive Christian duty and a characteristic function of Methodist organisation. We are servants of Him Who went about doing good; of Him Who, when He saw the multitudes, had great compassion on them, and Whom the common people heard gladly—

“The Word Who wrought,
With human hands, the creed of creeds,
In loveliness of perfect deeds
More strong than all poetic thought.”

Can the twentieth century provide a career and talent, room to labour, and security to enjoy the fruits of labour, and place society on the basis of a social idea which is eternal, and a Social Being Who is God? Can Methodism, as of yore, help God to make man? With hope we take up our commission. Our Gospel is complete to the standard of perfection for all humanity's varying conditions and recurring necessities. It is a Gospel—not a doomspel—of Reality, Conscience, Justice, Service, and Brotherhood; and our duty concerning its application to the wants of the age is plain and

imperative. Man, home, society, commerce, politics are to be made sound and sweet at heart. Existence here is to be made glad and blessed.

“So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So nigh is God to man.”

And we, according to God's promise, “look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

The development and triumph of democratic ideas lay a solemn responsibility upon us. We belong to the people. The people's will is now the dominant power. The momentous duty is ours of witnessing to this truth that “a Sovereign people must have a Sovereign God,” and that unless God live in and rule through the people, the end of all our boasted progress will be chaos, vanity and evil. A century ago Methodism saved England. Had it not been for her influence then, “no man could tell to what a depth of degradation England would have sunk.”

The world is our parish, and until its kingdoms have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, the Evangel of Goodwill and Love will need our utterance and illustration. A review of our missionary operations, both Home and Foreign, deepens our conviction in the Divine Plan of Missions, and our part in it calls forth the most persistent advocacy, assistance and extension—not

merely a continuance, but a substantial increase of support, that our missions may not only maintain the positions won, but enter upon a more vigorous campaign of still further aggressive action.

III.

IT HAS A SPIRITUAL MISSION.

For "the soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." "You have nothing to do but to save souls." The sin of the world is real; the guilt of sin is demonstrable. The salvation of the regenerate is equally factual, and the consequent holiness evidential. Between these two poles of moral being lies humanity. Our mission includes the proclamation of a "free, full, and present salvation from all sin, for all sinners for ever." Having ourselves obtained mercy, we faint not in the proclamation of such a glorious Gospel, knowing that—

"He is his own best evidence
Whose witness is within."

"What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell."

Religion is the spiritual secret of the art of life; and our age, with an emphasis peculiar to it, testifies to the reality of the religious feeling of man. The deepest want and most conscious need of humanity is the Christ of God. As never before the consciousness of man is moral, and this moral consciousness becomes daily more Christian. The

soul of things is Christian, and the ultimate absolute conquest of all human heart and mind by Christ is only a matter of time and freedom.

Our age is weary of negations, and of presentations of a Christianity without a Christ. A century of criticism has resulted in a renewed revelation and a rediscovered Christ, and to-day men are asking pathetically and persistently—

“O where is He Who trod the sea ;

O where is He Who came to save?”

The indomitable conscience speaks, and men tortured with phases of doubt beseech us to show them the Father. Souls burdened with the condemnation of guilt are pleading—“We would see Jesus.” And in those sweetest and most potent words—words that cover the eternal passion and conquer the eternal pain—“Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest —we have a Gospel for the age.

But the contents of our mission are by no means exhausted, nor are our spiritual aims realised, in the turning of many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The saved soul is entrusted to us for spiritual culture and growth in grace. We dare not lessen the charta of Methodism — “To spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land.” To this our numerous agencies have been specially adapted, and while

we desiderate a yet bolder policy of aggression on modern evils, a more vigorous plan of campaign, and the adoption of multiplied agencies to reach and reclaim the lapsed masses, we must be equally anxious for the development of the spiritual life of those whom the Lord has added unto us, such as are being saved.

The source of power requisite to give effectiveness to such a sublime mission is nigh at hand, and not afar off. With eyes open for God's present revelation, hearts waiting for His cleansing inspiration, and lives responsive to His prompting touch, we shall receive power.

The greater things which the Lord hath done are but the earnest of the future's greater works.

"All the good the past hath garnered,
All the present yet hath won,
Fades before the glorious future
Like the stars before the sun."

Let us quit the enervation of camp life and march boldly forward, our feet keeping time with the music of our Divine mission. Then the promised "greater things" shall we do. We are invited to a new era in Christian experience and achievement. The problems that perplex are as nothing to the power that propels. New battles shall be followed by new triumphs. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. We do not serve

a Christ Who comes laggardly forth at the repeated call of an alien time. "Best of all, God is with us," and our humanity has no gloom He cannot lift, no curse He cannot cleanse, and no sorrow He cannot soothe. In the presence of abiding good and infinite destiny we labour. O! let us rise to the measure of the Divine Spirit's compulsion; live on the wealth of the unsearchable riches of Christ; and grow in the bosom of the illimitable God.

There is a Divine strategy in Providence; an opportunity in events that brooks no delay. In affairs spiritual no less than material "there is a tide which taken at its flood leads on to fortune," "and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

"To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil;
O may it all my powers engage,
To do my Master's will."

Let us cling to the message of the atoning Cross, seeking the baptism of yet another and fuller Pentecost, and of future Methodism it shall not be said, "The former days were better than these." "The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times as many more as ye are, and bless as He hath promised you."

